On Blackness: The Role and Positionality of Black Public Intellectuals in Post-94 South Africa

Vuyolwethu Seti

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SUPERVISOR: DR R.F MUKHUDWANA

CO-SUPERVISOR: PROF T SITHOLE

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DECLARATION

Name: **Vuyolwethu Seti**

Student number: **58561013**

Degree: **Doctor of Philosophy in Communication**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the role and positionality of three Black public intellectuals in post-94 South Africa, namely, Simphiwe Dana, Ntsiki Mazwai and Sisonke Msimang. For the purpose of this study, I analysed the twitter postings shared by these intellectuals on various social matters that concern the condition of the Black in post-94 South Africa. Using Fanon's Native Intellectual Consciousness as a lens, the study seeks to capture and evaluate an emergent form of 'cyber' activism in the country. The main argument of this thesis is that, the concept and function of intellectualism must undergo a complete overhaul, beginning with the accommodation of more voices, particularly those of oppressed Black women. For this reason, the study is based on three Black women and seeks to dismantle the colonial lens through which Black women are studied

This study not only historicises Black women as producers, users and custodians of knowledge but it also situates their lived experiences as relevant 'knowledges' albeit ignored in discourse. Moreover, the study is not only a form of epistemic protest against epistemic racism, but it is also a form of Black positioning in communication studies. I therefore posit that, Black Twitter is the communicative plane on which blackness performs and articulates itself, for itself. For this purpose, I conceptualise Black Solidarity within Communication studies; a field that often pretends to be only marginally affected by issues of race. This study contributes to Communication Studies, a new, raw and altruistic way of studying blackness by allowing it to think, and speak through its pain as opposed to the usual pathologising white gaze.

Using the decolonial concept of a traditional Imbadu as the methodological aspect in conducting this study, I observe that even in the face of debilitating colonial hangover, blackness persists through those intellectuals whose intergenerational trauma forces them to think and speak from Blackness. The chosen intellectuals who are feminists by choice, think and speak from Blackness albeit being silenced by oppression. As such, the study itself is a pedagogical contradiction to the orthodox axiology of a detached scholar and hence written in the autobiographical form.

KEY TERMS:

Blackness, public intellectual, positionality, race and racism, Black-African feminism, Africana Womanism, coloniality, decolonialility, apartheid

DEDICATION

To my ancestors, these pages record the trauma you could not pen down but you left imbedded in my blood; may you never stop fighting through me!

For my children Yhanga-Anganathi, Nime Zulakhe, Yonga Abambo and Zazimbo Siyoyo

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PREFACE

In explaining the plight of the thinking Black woman in the anti-black world, Spillers (1987: 65) postulates “let’s face it, I am a marked woman. But not everybody knows my name”. In this statement Spillers (1987) speaks to my positionality as the author of this thesis as well as that of other Black women who are engaged in ‘wake work’. Spillers (1987) explains that the anti-Black world seeks the silence of the oppressed as it drowns them in perpetual violence. She impresses upon us that the system knows to put a mark on our back once we speak from our positionality even when it does not know who we are individually. The silencing of Blackness intensifies even more, where Black women, who are at the bottom of the ‘humanity’ chain, are concerned. This is why I have chosen to structure this thesis as an involved scholar, channelling the voices and the self-narration of three Black women conversing on the fact of Blackness.

In this thesis, I speak loudly, fiercely and boldly about Blackness; in conjunction with the chosen intellectuals and in conversation with extant literature. The neo-colonial world and its academy calls upon the Black to die in order to be born anew in its pearl corridors. Through this thesis, I have chosen to live and to let live the pain, trauma and colonial wounds of other Black people. I position the recognition and treatment of these colonial wounds as the path to healing, entailing the impotent black rant and the solidarity of blackness. I, like Biko (2004) assert that our healing will come once we look inwardly; that even in the “empty shell” that has been left by colonial-apartheid there is hope for healing. In this thesis, the reader is taken through various emotions while a conversation occurs between Dana, Mazwai, Msimang and theory as well as myself (as an involved scholar). This does not entail speaking for the three Black intellectuals, but rather according them the platform to speak and speaking alongside them as they also speak alongside other South African Black women, each with their own experiences, pain and emotions. After all, decolonial research is about positioning the multiplicity of experiences and pain. The aim of this Preface is to reiterate that my position in this thesis is that of an involved scholar speaking from Blackness. Simphiwe Dana in one of her most popular songs titled ***Ihili-hili*** cries:

Ndingakuphendula njani (How do I answer you)

Ndingenamsindo ngenxa yenkumbulo (Without being enraged by remembering)

Xa ufun' igama lam (When you ask for my name)

Andinanto ndinegama qha (I have nothing, all I have is my name)

This song/lyric explains the rage/anger/loudness that the reader may feel translated through the pages as they engage this work. Such is not by chance nor mistake. The fact of Blackness should enrage us all; and so yes I am being angry and vulgar on purpose. We truly have nothing else to give the neo-colonial, racist and sexist world, all we have is our names and we are prepared to fight to the bitter end to preserve that. Dana in this song asserts that we are enraged every time we remember, when we remember our past kingdoms, our humanity that has been snatched from us, our culture and heritage that have been bastardised, our history that has been stolen and distorted, our oppression and our pain; we are enraged. How do I answer you without seething from memories of loss, pain and trauma? Working on this thesis forced me not only to unveil Blackness and look it in the eye but also to contend with all that looked back at me. It also forced me to remember my own pain. I made the decision to speak from my positionality without trepidation or shame. With this said I am aware that the neo-colonial academy strives upon muffled Black voices and would militate against a thesis of this nature. This is because oppressive systems call upon the oppressed to be 'graceful' in their oppression. Our refusal to be silent is necessary as we record our experience in the world in discourse. Sharpe (2014) calls this "wake work" and asserts that it is crucial work for all Black intellectuals to do. As such, this is my offering.

In this thesis I have discarded all rationality, for how does one remain rational in a world that is devoid of rationality. Maldonado-Torres (2005) asserts that the expectation for Black people to be rational under oppression is in itself racist and traumatic. It leaves Black people no choice but to 'die' in order to assume 'reason'. Maldonado-Torres (2005) further illustrates that how epistemic racism is so violent that it leaves us two choices; to lose all rationality and assert our humanity; or assert the contradictions in discourse and propose new formulas. As stated elsewhere I have chosen to assert my humanity and that of those who look like me in these pages. This

thesis lays bare the system that breaks Black women through systematic violence and then silences them. I am these women, this is why I am part of this conversation in a deeply entrenched manner. This thesis is all of us engaging in ‘coerced speech’, we know we have to speak to make the world anew for the benefit of all who live in it. The Black woman is engaged in epistemic disobedience, thinking from the position of the unthought. This is disruptive speech, those who are spoken about and ‘determined without’ are speaking for themselves. We are thinking from Blackness.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction and Background to the study

This thesis seeks to explore the role and positionality of three Black public intellectuals in post-94 South Africa, namely, Simphiwe Dana, Ntsiki Mazwai and Sisonke Msimang. For the purpose of this study, I will analyse the twitter postings shared by these intellectuals on various social matters that concern the condition of the Black in post-94 South Africa. The three chosen intellectuals are similar and different in many respects hence they tend to engage different social matters or approach the same matter from different angles. The common thread between them is their concern for issues that affect Black people in South Africa, Africa and the world over, as do their call for lasting solutions to the perpetual subjugation of Black South Africans. This study is unapologetic in its approach to matters of blackness when analysing the role and positionality of Black intellectuals in general and the three chosen intellectuals in particular. It focuses on the contributions they make to finding lasting solutions to the plight of Black South Africans in various respects.

In this preliminary chapter, I will provide a background into the problem that prompts this research; I will also offer a detailed motivation for a study of this nature as a narrative of the Black condition told from Blackness, particularly in the study of communications. The context of the study explains the fact of blackness and the hierarchical nature of South African society that has its roots in colonial history but persists to this day unabated. I have also provided the study's rationale, the objectives, the methodological structure and a detailed literature background that contextualises the thesis. The study will observe the humanity, humanness and the extent of coloniality that persists after the "decolonisation" of South Africa where the numerical majority is still excluded, whose human dignity is yet to be restored and whose story needs to be told. This study is inspired by and stems from the writings and ideals of Fanon, Biko and Maldonado-Torres, Spivak, hooks, More, Malcolm X and others who speak on the Black condition.

1.2 The research problem

The Black majority in South Africa has over the past few years called for justice and the decolonisation of being, knowledge, and the economy. This majority seeks true liberation following the political "freedom" that was supposedly achieved in 1994. These calls for the emancipation of the oppressed tie closely with similar events all over the world where Black people continue to face unfair discrimination, systematic exclusions, racism and disenfranchisement. The Black nation has begun an awakening to the truth of their condition and position in the world and the causes thereof. This awakening is coupled with a slow but steady increase in Black consciousness, a renewed desire to think and speak from blackness, and expressions of decolonial love and rage. With that said, South Africa, as a young democracy is still very unbalanced and unequal. The South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) reported that, in 2018, South Africa had the most unequal society in the whole world. The SAHRC estimated that 64% Black people live in dire poverty, while 41% Coloureds, 6% Indians and only 1% whites live in poverty. Such, demonstrated that the Black majority is still confronted with the condition of damnation at every turn while the minority lives in obscene privilege secured by colonial-apartheid. Over two (2) decades since democracy, South Africa is still largely racially segregated in its spatial outlook. This is most evident in places of living and working, with the country's wealth remaining in the hands of the white minority.

The upsurge in the use of social media amongst the country's citizens has exposed underlying and unaddressed racism which clearly demonstrates the necessary public collapse of the myth of a "rainbow nation". The recent increase in racist outbursts on social media is a clear indication of the "true" state of the rainbow nation. The cries of the Black majority have fallen on deaf ears in the political and civil society, as they always do, which has led to increased civil unrest. The continued subjugation and perpetual abject poverty the Black majority is exclusively privy to has led to the emergence of a small community of Black public intellectuals whose social commentary and activism give voice to the fact of blackness in South Africa. This study attempts to capture and evaluate this emergent form of 'cyber' activism in the country. The envisaged contribution of this study to knowledge is the study itself as a pedagogical contradiction to the orthodox axiology of a detached scholar. This study is not only a form of epistemic protest against epistemic racism; it is also a form of

Black positioning in communication studies. This study is, by design vulgar, raw and true to the existential condition of blackness in the anti-Black world. As an involved scholar, this study challenges the coloniality through which blackness is typically studied in communication studies. In this study, blackness speaks from blackness without shame, apology, inferiority nor fear. Through this work, blackness will articulate its own pain and perform itself, for itself, by itself. Additionally, this is an engaged study that does not brush over the emotional and psychological effects of damnation. The researcher is involved not as an observer but as a participant in the fact of blackness. The permeation of emotions is allowed and sought after, with the understanding of the embodiment of knowledge and lack of objectivity in humanities research.

1.3 The context of the problem

The study is set in post-apartheid South Africa, where Black people still suffer the aftermath of colonialism and apartheid which ensures that they suffer the brunt of poverty and unequal access to resources. The South African Black majority has finally come out of its infatuation with the myth of the “rainbow nation” and is beginning to ask questions of justice and the restoration of human dignity for the marginalised. Upon years of silent cries and hopes that something would change, they remain a poverty stricken, economically suppressed group who are constantly instructed to “move on” and “remember Mandela” by the settler who still enjoys colonial privileges.

For the first time since 1994, Black South Africans are beginning to own the truth of the trauma they carry with their bodies by virtue of being black. For the first time, they want to express their pain and tell their stories themselves. This study comes at the foot of a number of social movements through which the Black majority of SA has expressed anger at their continued and blatant subjugation, oppression and the racism they still experience 22 years after the dawn of “democracy”. These movements, such as #AfrikaansMustFall, #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall have given rise to the emergence and recognition of social commentators of an unusual nature, divorced from academic corridors but existing within the masses in ways academics do not. A large section of this project will be based on the analysis of social media postings of three Black intellectuals on issues of blackness and the Black condition and the conversations and debates that are influenced by said postings. Simphiwe Dana,

Ntsiki Mazwai and Sisonke Msimang are all socially connected Black women who are fully aware of and choose to speak up on the Black condition using their art (music, poetry and creative writing), social media (Twitter and Facebook) as well as mainstream media where possible. Below I provide a brief introduction into each of the chosen intellectuals:

Simphiwe Dana

Simphiwe is perhaps one of the most popular musicians in South Africa; she emerged into the music scene in 2004 with a powerful album titled *Zandisile*. She delivers her poetic musical renditions mainly in isiXhosa; Simphiwe is described as a 'renegade' by Gqola (2013) who conducted an in-depth study on her work and life. Simphiwe has 'redefined the game' for Black women in South Africa, she un-ordinarily deviated from the norm that many Black women followed without interrogation. At the time of her debut, she wore natural hair (dreadlocks) and appeared to focus her music on the Black condition, something that had not been seen in post-94 discourse (Gqola, 2013). Her second album, where she appeared to 'resign' from an unjust system aptly titled '*The One Love Movement on Bantu Biko Street*' revealed a politically aware and concerned woman who questioned government policies and invoked the spirit of Biko's Black Consciousness ideology. Simphiwe still provides commentary on Black education, mother tongue education, Black hair, Black beauty, racism and many other topical issues discussed on Black twitter.

Ntsiki Mazwai

Ntsiki is possibly the most controversial of the chosen three intellectuals; she is constantly labelled a 'hater' by members of all racial groups in the country. She is a poet and musical artist who has worked with various other artists. Of all the chosen intellectuals, Ntsiki is the most audacious about the kind of South Africa she dreams of. She is slammed by many for her commentary on decolonizing religion and its influence on 'being', on transforming the economy and issues of land. She provides prime literature on who she views as 'African' or what it means to be black. To this end she opposes the use of what she calls "weaves/fake hair" by Black women and identifies this behaviour with 'self-hate'. She criticizes the ruling party incessantly which tends to get her in a lot of trouble with its supporters who in turn label her all kinds of demeaning names.

Sisonke Msimang

Sisonke is a writer who contributes columns to news agencies in the country, she writes for 'The Daily Maverick' and 'Mail and Guardian'. She is a gender activist who comments on issues that affect Black women in particular and women in general. She also speaks, in her various platforms, on blackness and the Black condition in general. She therefore provides this study with a unique view of female issues. She has been working as Programme Specialist for Sonke Gender Justice since 2013; this means her perspective will feed scientifically researched literature on gender issues to this study.

1.4 Rationale

This thesis will take a different shape to that of an ordinary PhD study, in purpose and in delivery. The purpose of this study therefore is a cause bigger than any research text can explain; it is a need to position "Black speak" in Black South African discourse. The purpose here is to tell my story and the story of many who look like me, the best way I know how, for generations of Black boys and girls who are to be born into suffocating epistemic white supremacy. This is the reason I do not write in the third person, because this is my story, this is our story and I am only telling it because I have the opportunity. In addition, this is my form of academic contribution, where I legitimize Black knowledge in an authentic voice even when it goes against the grain. This study sets itself within the constructivism paradigm which encourages an involved scholar, where the 'investigator' and the object of investigation are assumed to be interactively linked so that the 'findings' are literally created as the investigation proceeds (Guba and Lincoln 1994).

The purpose of the study will be both exploratory and explanatory in order to achieve set aims and objectives. Neuman (2011) stated that, exploratory research is mostly used when the subject being researched is new and little is known about it. The general goal is to formulate precise questions that can be addressed in future research. Neuman (2011) also adds that, exploratory research tends to answer the 'what' question of research but does not really yield definitive answers. This is the reason the explanatory objective is necessary, as it is usually used in conjunction with

and to build on exploratory and descriptive research. An explanatory study also addresses the causes and reasons behind a particular phenomenon. Explanatory researchers, through the employment of multiple strategies, develop a novel idea and provide empirical evidence to support or refute it (Neuman 2011). The following are research objectives guiding this study:

1.5 Objectives

1. To evaluate the extent to which these three public intellectuals fulfil the role and functions of a public intellectual, using Fanon's Native Intellectual's Consciousness theory as a yardstick.
2. To investigate how Black public intellectuals use social media for social activism.
3. To evaluate the positionality of Black public intellectuals and their resultant discourses on matters of identity, politics, feminism, race and Blackness.
4. To explore how Black women position themselves as thinkers, speakers and liberators.

1.6 Background

1.6.1 Activism in the age of Social Media

The media industry as a whole has the amazing power to influence and shape public opinion and agenda. It has been used to spear-head campaigns and spread positive messages that are meant to change the behaviour of media consumers. The media have the almost exclusive ability to make heroes or villains out of groups or individuals. However, traditional media usually serve an agenda, class or purpose and have limitations. Over the last decade, social media have stormed the space and allowed social activism to thrive and to occur in real time. Social media activism can be seen as the use of social media sites to support a cause or speak out on a particular social issue. Social media have famously been used to facilitate protests against dictatorship in the Arab world, to unite the youth for or against a cause in parts of the continent or to inform and rally behind certain beliefs. Cyril (2014) asserts that where Black people are concerned, social media serves as a counter-space where narrative that is ignored by mainstream media gets a voice. To a large extent, social media spaces are actually

used to represent the Black voice that is silenced in traditional media (Cyril 2014). The nature, accessibility and openness of social media make it so that all participants have a role to play in the "ecosystem of connective media" (Ellcessor 2016). This cannot be better illustrated than with the "Egyptian Revolution" where protest actions were planned and organised on social media. Eltantaway and Wiest (2011) argue that the availability of sufficient technological resources provided by the government for the socio-economic advancement of citizens was in fact used to launch cyber-protests. In this case, the availability of these resources provided vocal ammunition to a people angered and defeated by decades of suppression. Social media make it so that the oppressed no longer have to put their bodies on the line in physical protest but can get support of causes online before any physical action is undertaken. Conversely, Davenport and Armstrong (2011) note that for Black people, physical protest is always met with brutal force from the state and police, this as an attempt to stifle communities from voicing disconcertion. They further posit that it is dangerous to 'protest while black'. This has resulted in the Black voice being largely absent, although this group experiences the magnitude of injustice.

In the absence of true representation of the stories of oppressed groups on mainstream media, social media sites are thus used to share these stories. Social media are described as web-based tools and services that allow users to create, share, rate and search for content (Bohler-Muller and van der Merwe 2011). Because content is shared relatively freely with little regulation, social media tend to model themselves out of and emerge to reflect a society's state. This is to say, the use of social media reflects the agenda that is most important to society at a given time. In South Africa for example, in the context of activism, social media have the potential to both help and harm any process of democratization as these sites tend to be accessible to anyone, those in favour of and those against the cause. However, one can never underestimate the convenience and power of social media in activism. As Cyril (2014) noted, the Black voice is in jeopardy because white media houses go the extra mile to silence it; social media then serve as the medium through which this voice can be awakened. Historically, the oppressed organised themselves through meetings and word of mouth and now social media provide a far more reaching access. Social media such as Facebook and Twitter, as the most popular social networks in South Africa, are used to address issues that affect certain groups of people. It was clear

that Twitter would be influential on matters that affect Black people all over the world, and Black people would reduce it to a close-knit community where they support each other and mourn their collective condition together. Black Twitter has become the political horizon upon which blackness performs its collective pain.

1.6.2 Black Twitter: the Arena of the political

Black Twitter is explained by Complex Magazine (2016) as “cultural identity on twitter focused primarily on issues of interest to the Black community”. This community of influential young people first took shape in the USA, but has expanded all over the Black world. In a number of instances, Black people from all over the world provide commentary on issues that are unique to or affect the Black community. The emergence and rapid growth of Black Twitter has brought the Black community together more than has been seen in past centuries. Clark (2016) posits that Black Twitter can be broken into three levels of connection, one of personal community and reflects connections with people in dimensions other than twitter.

The second level is identified as thematic notes and is where members debate about a particular topic. This topic is usually anything from a TV shows music awards or how it is to grow up black. The third level is when the personal connections and thematic notes intersect around a specific topic and then a meta-network can be seen. Mannya interviewed by Mosiuoa (2014) described Black Twitter as “a central hub of credible, timeous, relevant information and recklessness”. Mannya noted the chaotic nature of Black Twitter, claiming that, an outsider looking in might think that it is a space filled with comedians because of the nature of debate. This funny/serious/sad/joyful/angry/peaceful sense one gets on the platform is representative of the Black condition completely.

Masemola (2015) on the other hand admonishes Black Twitter for being elitist and attending only to issues that affect the middle class and the rich. Masemola (2015) also asserts that the platform makes users judge one another based on unrealistic and unclear ‘levels of blackness’. This makes the platform resemble a clique of popular users who get to judge other’s eligibility to enter the space. Black Twitter makes it clear

that the personal is political and what affects one Black person is likely to affect others in certain ways; because racism is a system that affects the group as whole. Black Twitter is a highly politicised space. There isn't a button that one clicks, or a group one joins to be part of Black Twitter. The community has developed organically out of linked and similar cultural, political and living conditions. Members of this platform are those who dare to ask questions, those who are aware or are "woke" in Black speak. Mosiuoa (2014) credits Black Twitter for getting more youths interested in politics, politicians and political life in the country. One becomes exposed to issues that affect Black people as whole and not just themselves, leading to important questions about the Black condition. Black Twitter rallies together when a Black person is shot by the police in the USA, or when a Black person is dehumanized in South Africa. In South Africa, Black Twitter consists of some of the country's most influential young Black intellectuals and thought leaders, who quickly take the lead in the occurrence of any event that affects the Black community. Black people, on Black Twitter, are redefining blackness and the South Africa they want to live in and at times members of the community tend to get in trouble with the dominant society for being "racist".

Black Twitter does not discriminate its members; one can be from any racial group and be a member of Black Twitter. All it takes is for one to recognize and vocalise the unnecessary cruelty of the system in which we live and how it exploits and dehumanizes Black people. Masemola (2015) notes that one being Black does not automatically get them space on Black Twitter, anyone who is seen as an enemy of the struggle for Black people's freedom will not be accepted by members of this platform. Clark (2016) emphasizes that Black Twitter comprises of a vast community of people who advocate for justice for all oppressed people, the majority of whom happen to be Black. The platform is important as a launching pad for the activism of those who are ignored in mainstream media and cannot always be present for physical protest.

1.6.3 Blackness and identity politics/ Race

The question of being Black in the anti-Black is one that many scholars have grappled with for centuries. Du Bois (1994) called this 'peculiar' even for those who have known nothing else. Du Bois (1994), Fanon ([1952] 2008), Smith (1999) and Biko (2004) all

agreed that, although the anti-Black world deliberately makes the 'others' natives, the problem is the settler who creates conditions of inhumanity and depravation on lands that do not belong to him. Primarily, Biko (2004) told us that, nothing is the matter with Black people, the problem is white racism; yet decades later we still grapple with the question of Black identity. The politics of blackness and discovering what that exactly means have been heated in the South African discourses and media. Fanon ([1952] 2008) teaches us that, Black is a creation of white racism, an attempt to create an inferiorised other in order to perpetuate the myth of the superior white race. It is true that, race is a social construct, one that was necessary to legitimise the occupation, dispossession, enslavement and murder of those who were created on the lower end of racial pyramid. This is not to claim that race does not matter today, it does. As Biko (2004) posited, in occupied South Africa, the colour of one's skin determines their economic prospects, where one is educated, or treated when ill, where one lives, and ultimately where one is buried. Although we may recognise that the concept of race is a construction, it is important that we also recognise how it has material impact on those who are conceptualised as an anomaly today. Maldonado-Torres (2016) invites us to think of the condition of the "other" as the zone of non-being.

In order to illustrate how dire this zone is, Maldonado-Torres (2016) perceives it as a space riddled with legitimised perpetual war against those who occupy it. He shows us that, the world not only turns a blind eye but most times actually allows this war to continue on the bodies of those who are "outside" of race and therefore outside of humanity. When they cry from under the crushing weight of oppression, they are positioned as 'the problem' (Du Bois 1994). Like Fanon ([1952] 2008), Maldonado-Torres (2016) asserts that, the Black is external to human and by extension, external to gender, sexuality or individuality. It is a far-cry for those in the zone of non-being to expect the anti-Black world to afford them the status of gendered individuals who are thinking through sexuality etc. To the anti-Black world, when one Black is seen, all blacks have been seen; as Fanon ([1952] 2008) posits. In the white colonial imaginary, the Black is synonymous with bestiality, genitalia, primitivity and lack of civility. The coloniser created the Black through thousands of anecdotes, lies and stereotypes (Fanon [1952] 2008). It is clear, however that the concept of race takes on a different tune depending on where one is located. The USA for example, embraced the 'one

drop rule' where anyone with a single drop of so called 'Black blood' would be considered Black no matter how 'white passing' they were. South Africa and much of Africa on the other hand have a very cut and dry conception of race. Those who are classified as Black typically have no visible signs of racial-mixing, while those who do are classified as Coloured. In most instances, blacks are called 'African' which is interchangeable with the term 'black'. South Africa also embraced Biko's definition of Black for the purposes of economic empowerment for the previously disadvantaged (Africans, Coloureds and Indians). For this study, I limit the term 'black' to purely African descendants, the so called 'Blacks and Coloureds'. I am careful with this classification as I am aware that 'Coloured' identity is a deeply sensitive and personal subject, I therefore do not seek to speak on their behalf or enforce an undesirable identity onto them.

This is evident in the chosen public intellectuals, who happen to be Black Africans. This is also a deliberate act on my part, because the oppression of the different races in the country was and is different and should be studied independently. This is not to claim that others were not oppressed but that they were oppressed in particular ways and that those communities deserve an opportunity to speak to themselves. The Indian population is excluded because it is considered 'black' only for BEE purposes, in today's South Africa, but is very commonly known as being ethnically and culturally Indian. I am being purposefully fundamental in this study, to situate Biko (2004) in today's logic as well as to express the specificity of Black oppression. In the past 2 years, South Africa has seen a lot of bottled up social issues come to the fore. The recent spate of racism and racist beliefs clearly proves that there is resentment that was never and desperately needs to be addressed (Odhiambo, 2008). Biko (2004) proclaimed that, "there is no Black problem in South Africa, the problem is white racism and it rests squarely on the laps of the white society". This proclamation absolves black people of the need to assimilate to whiteness, the overwhelming feeling identified by Fanon ([1952] 2008) of always having to match up to whiteness and never being able to. It is important to understand what it means to be black, to be African and to be woman.

1.6.4 The Blackness of feminism

Feminist thought is one of the foremost schools of thought where the liberation of women is concerned. Women over the centuries have called for total emancipation from men in the areas of home, economy and sexual being. Scholars like Crenshaw (1989), hooks (2009), and Collins (1990, 2005) all recognise the importance of centralising the struggles for women emancipation and how the matrix of domination affects Black women in particular. In essence, feminism is an attempt by oppressed women to speak for themselves in an attempt to free themselves from sexist, patriarchal systems that oppress them in the home or at work. The question however, is whether feminism should be seen as speaking for both oppressed Black women and the white women who oppress them or benefit materially from their oppression.

Can there be true sisterhood between the master and her slave? The Black woman who first developed Africana Womanism, DR Clenora Hudson Weems, thinks not. In an interview with Yaa Asantewa-Reed (2001), Weems lambasts Black women who ascribe to feminist thought by claiming that this amounts to Black women "naming" themselves after their oppressors, which of whom include 'white women'.

She calls for Black women to develop their own schools of thought that will address their particular forms of oppression; these are ignored by feminism because the white woman does not want to be put on trial. Weems (2001) therefore calls for a struggle that is specific to the oppression of Africana women; this includes continental African women and those in the diaspora. Collins (1990) posits that Black women's struggles do not get as much attention as those of their white counterparts, even as they march side by side. She notes, "the coloured girl is not known and hence not believed in". This is to emphasise the invisibility of the pain of Black women, suppressed even in the movements that are modelled after her. Sanger (2003) asserts that the Black woman has been located as needing "fixing", policing and regulation in order to fit into a marked norm, that of being a white woman. Historically, Black women were used to strengthen the notion of blacks as an inferior race. As the creators and breeders of the Black nation, such "lascivious", "promiscuous" and "savage" women couldn't possibly raise a civilised nation. Black women's physique has been presented as proof that blacks were inhuman savages who could not be taken seriously as they cared only about sex and nakedness. These myths have never been publicly dismantled and so

the contemporary Black woman does not get the opportunity to see herself as a thinker, creator, embodiment or an activist for knowing/knowledge (Hobson, 2003). This study, which is based on three Black women, seeks to dismantle this view of the Black woman. To highlight not only the beauty and adequacy of her form, but to celebrate the knowledge she possesses and should pass on through the generations. In Social media spaces, Black women are exposed to the age old vitriol of how they will never be nearly as good as their white counterparts, no matter how hard they try or how good they are.

Hobson (2003) notes the much-discussed coverage of Serena Williams' 'appropriateness' for the 'civilized' sport of tennis. The coverage and comments all over news and social media focused mainly on her buttocks, as they have for many years. It is often reported on a number of news outlets that her outfit was 'tacky' and an 'inappropriate display of sexuality'; wherein she is constantly compared to the 'beautiful', 'classy' and 'graceful' Maria Sharapova (Hobson, 2003). This proves Fanon's ([1952] 2008) assertion that, the Black is not just a being in their own right but is a being in comparison to the white man. The terminology used to describe Serena Williams and Black female bodies roots itself in historic view of African 'savage' women and their bodies, buttocks in particular, as being 'grotesque', 'strange', 'unfeminine', and 'obscene'.

This view dates back to the exploitation of Saartjie Baartman in Europe, for her 'strange' buttocks. The Black woman in South Africa has been ostracised in all spheres for her role as producer and custodian of knowledge. Her body has also been reduced to a battle ground for man whose agenda was to position himself above her. From Saartjie Baartman to present day Serena Williams, the Black female has presented an age old dilemma for both Black and white men. Her form is both revered and eroticised, it is called grotesque and hyper-sexualised, and she's both beautiful and ugly. All this is an attempt to ensure that the Black woman knows that she and all she has to offer is never adequate, and never recognised. She must understand that her place is not in thinking or acting; she must remain domesticated to speak only when spoken to which has enhanced the project of ignoring Black women's contributions in society. The exploitation of Black women is not only perpetuated by Europeans, Black women

are strewn all over music videos and advertisements in their nakedness by Black men who also eroticise them for sales. Black women have been at the bottom of the food chain for as long as we can remember and that has not changed much but improved slightly as to give the impression of progress. In economic, social and cultural terms, Black women have been silenced and spoken for over centuries and that has to change. Unless feminist thought ventures to address the particular oppression of Black women, in the hands of white men and women as well as Black men; then it does not serve Black women sufficiently. Along with other decolonial movements, it is imperative that the Black woman ceases to be seen through the dehumanising colonial gaze.

1.6.5 The decolonisation discourse in South African

The question of decolonisation and what it means, at what point it is achieved has occupied public discourse for the past few years in South Africa. The point of departure for this question is whether or not the 'democracy' that was achieved in 1994 qualifies as decolonisation and whether this is enough. If we understand decolonisation as the undoing of colonisation, do we then believe that, decolonisation has been achieved through the disbandment of formal colonial administration? These are the questions that the previously colonised natives of the global south have had to ask themselves. Fanon ([1961] 1990) shows us that the abolition of colonisation does not necessarily mean the disappearance of all the effects thereof.

Colonisation is a carefully calculated process that lasts centuries so it cannot be taken for granted that the domination of the 'other' leaves lasting physical, psychological, socio-economic and spatial residue. Smith (2014) rightly argued that, colonialism was rooted in anti-blackness and indigenous genocide and because of this; these groups still suffer the aftermath of having been colonised. Smith (2014) added that, the remaining settler colonialism then restores the same logic of anti-blackness and genocide of the 'other'. South Africa experienced a special type of colonisation, with the English and the Dutch both settling the land and dominating natives. With that said, unlike most of the continent, the coloniser did not leave the country once colonisation was abolished; meaning the effects were never unfelt in acute ways. 1994 was expected to usher in a new era for the country, one where, the settler and native would

live side by side in a non-racial society. To date, this society has not been achieved and as a result Black South Africans are at the forefront of the decolonisation debate, questioning the current brand of democracy which they view as being mainly political and not yet material. Black South Africans still primarily live in abject poverty, are landless, with little prospects available for a fortunate few. Racism is still very prevalent in workplaces and society as whole, the systematic exclusion of blacks from certain spaces and exclusiveness of these spaces for white bodies is reminiscent of past atrocities. Hudson (2013) rightly noted that, colonialism survives on the creation of a dyad of elements, without which it would not be possible. Primarily, colonialism is the creation of a binary world in which there is a slave master and a slave, a coloniser and the colonised, a white man and a Black man. The logic of colonialism requires these binaries in order to create an "other" who suffers the brunt of the depravity of oppression. For over three centuries, this binary was maintained through the barrel of a gun and 1994 was finally seen as relief for the oppressed.

Not surprisingly, the dawn of a new era seems to have maintained the main the components of this binary world; with the white as master and the Black as servant; hence the renewed question of decoloniality. Maldonado-Torres (2016) explains that the lingering effects of colonisation, the aftermath that seems to refuse to end shows that colonialism morphs into coloniality; a system that maintains the domination of the formerly colonised in ways that are difficult to point out. Fanon ([1961] 1990) stated clearly that, when freedom is negotiated by the bourgeoisie; the former colony remains the property of the 'mother-country' with the colonies providing cheap labour for the coloniser's companies, supplying resources and precious minerals to the mother country under the supervision of the new elite. Hudson (2013) also noted that, through colonisation, the Black has no belonging or autonomy, is eternally invisible and yet hyper-visible. One sees this manifested in the debates which exteriorises Black people as foreigners in their own land. Since 1994, Black South Africans have been stuck in momentary 'rainbowism' trying to reconcile the country to bring all different people together. This task has proven too much a burden to bear, especially under suffocating economic, social, spatial and epistemic exclusion. This moment in history is a resignation from the silent oath that has embedded this group of people for over two decades. At this point blackness wants to speak, to think and to just be. Fanon ([1952] 2008) rightly argued, the importance of speaking from ones position is a means to

assume a certain culture and to form part of civilisation. The speaking that blackness is doing currently is valid and necessary. On the same juncture, Biko (2004), almost as if providing a prophecy for 2016 and onwards, alludes to the fact that, under the torture of white supremacy the Black majority will arrive at a place where they question the condition of their lives and the causes thereof. At this point, they will discover the worst kept secret that, their condition is caused by their Black skin. They will ask "what do I have to lose?" and realise that they have nothing to lose, and then they will abandon their silence and start to express for the world to see the cruelty of systematic and epistemic racism. Biko (2004) and Maldonado-Torres (2007) both urged the native to assert his being and not position himself as a nuisance to the system of epistemic white supremacy, he must imagine a new world and reclaim his culture from the deliberate arrest in the lies of colonial history. He must not feel pressure to assimilate but must celebrate his being in civilization; this is the role of decolonization (Biko 2004).

1.6.6 Views on Black public intellectual discourse

The colonial expansion not only brought with it the formalisation of western civilisation as the only norm but also cemented western ways of knowing as the sole truth, thereby making white people the all-knowing whose knowledge could not be questioned. This led to the marginalisation of other ways of knowing, of being and of viewing the world. Grosfuguel (2013) posits that, the need to centralise the white western man as the sole provider of knowledge, this impacted not only the Black but also the indigenous white woman. Historically, colonial administrations had local collaborators who would serve as translators, clerks and scribes for colonisers. Smith (1999) asserts that, these people then occupy the role of intellectuals once decolonisation begins. She further asserts that because western education tends to inferiorise everything non-western, these intellectuals are primarily taught self-hate and western-worship. Scholars like Gramsci (2014) admonish the limiting of the action and title of intellectualising only to those who have undergone formal university education. The public intellectuals should be one who is involved in the public realm in one form or another, as an artist, and writer, and speaker, a poet or a doctor (Cusick, 2009). I have stipulated the working definition of an intellectual for this study above in an attempt to argue for the expansion of this term to include more than the traditional sense of 'intellectual'. This manner of thinking is also rooted in Fanon's ([1961] 1990) call to imagine the world anew and to

recreate it in a more inclusive, just fashion. Fanon ([1961] 1990) perceives that in newly independent former colonies, the petite bourgeoisie who, in most cases served the coloniser tend to occupy the role of the intellectual. This is because some had been educated in the Western universities, or had learned the language of the oppressor and served as administrators for colonisers. These intellectuals tend to harbour feelings of shame and disgust towards their people as they have turned their backs on the "primitive" traditional beliefs that define the people. It is therefore no surprise that the people view intellectuals with a degree of suspicion, even when they are black. This study adopts a definition of Black public intellectuals that is inspired by the works of scholars like Makgetlaneng (2011), Gramsci (2016), West (1985) and Cusick (2009) where the intellectual engages the public as "knowledge producers and distributors" in many different forms. In this case intellectuals are held at high regard based on their connection with the public, Makgetlaneng (2011) puts emphasis on the need for Black intellectuals to attempt to solve the problems of the oppressed through the knowledge they possess. This view does not limit intellectualism to the qualification one holds, but to the value of the knowledge they have and how it contributes to the common cause.

Although this view has not completely dissipated yet, the attitude is slowly changing as scholars like Sithole (2012) challenge the view of intellectuals only as university professors but position intellectuals with the people where they acquire and distribute knowledge. In addition, Cushman (1999) noted the problems with definitions of "public" in the term "public intellectual" and highlighted that many scholars positioned the "public" as the middle and upper class, policy makers, administrators and professionals. In doing so, they diminished the knowledge of the working class and the poor as invalid and unimportant. This is applicable to African communities where the knowledge of the natives was seen as folklore, untested, unscientific and "only suspicion" and could only be valid if proven in academic institutions. These are the kinds of views I seek to debunk with this study, the inclusion of Black experiences and knowledge into the dominant episteme. It is therefore important that the different ways of knowing, the indigenous methods of 'being' be given the regard that they deserve in academic discourse. The first step towards achieving this is the creation of contextual research methods.

1.7 A Note on Method

In thinking about an appropriate methodology for this study, I was compelled to keep with the spirit of the study by situating the action of research from the point of view of the oppressed native. In the entire 'othered' world through the history of colonial-apartheid, the native is dehumanised, criminalised, and essentially "othered" through the process of research (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2017). One cannot be surprised when those whom 'science' has disregarded and pathologised for centuries, take issue with it. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2017: 186) links the concepts of research back to its dirty history of colonisation by asserting that once the West expanded the "all knowing God" to the European man; the African, the Aborigines and the native Indian became the "researched" other. It was this shift that made colonisation possible and thus it is the duty of the oppressed to unmask the methodologies for what they really are (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2017). Smith (1999: 91) asserts that, "the native comes to research as a problem". An object of pathological curiosity and enquiry.

The undertaking of research, for the native, bares a direct correlation with the pursuit and discovery of 'problems' not only in their communities but in their humanity. In South Africa, for example, it was missionaries, explorers and scientists who first ventured into our shores; studied and reported back to the mother countries on the 'problem of the native'. The native's body, territory, beliefs, values, culture, traditions have been dissected and torn apart through research (Smith 1999). It was research/researchers that legitimised the occupation and dispossession of native lands through the false notion of "the empty land". Natives were observed, recorded, and reported as 'problems' to make possible the renaming of not only their territories but their humanity, which was stripped away to make space for animalisation. White supremacy to date is maintained through scientific research outputs that are deliberately based in coloniality, invoking in natives memories of decapitated skulls that were used to "prove" the native was non-human. The native is therefore understandably suspicious of science or research because it has not served us any good, the recent calls for decolonised knowledge from the global south prove this fact. With this said, I want to assert that to research even in the 21st century the native comes dismembered, impoverished, commodified, dehumanised and dispossessed. It is therefore important that those who have been on the receiving end of oppression

begin to re-position the act and process of “research” for it to best suit their narratives. I undertake this task here by developing a contextual research method and infusing all the baggage that comes with blackness into the study.

The native should therefore find familiar means of speaking their truth that are outside of methods that disregard her. For this study, I proposed and developed a decolonial method hereby titled “Imbadu”. I have made the decision to rebel against methodologies that at best do not validate our experiences of colonisation and oppression or at worst, caused, endorsed and perpetuated said oppression. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2017: 187) argues that “decolonising methodologies must begin with unmasking the modern world system and global order, as the broader context from which research and methodology are cascading and are influenced”. He urges the colonised to embark on a process of acknowledging and recognising the dirtiness of the methodology (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2017). The chosen decolonial methodology of “Imbadu”, from where I stand allows the pain of the oppressed to self-narrate; thereby validating our experiences. What I am doing here is ‘thinking of the unthought, writing the unwritten and speaking the unspoken’.

Wilderson and Hartman (2003: 184) critique social science research for its assumption that one’s identity and ergo positionality does not affect their use of methodology and analysis. They claim that social science research seeks to understand research in an “un-raced manner” and that is unreasonable if not impossible. What this has achieved is the creation of a kind of ”multiculturalism that assumes we all have analogues identities that can be put into a basket of stories, and then that basket of stories can lead to similar interests” (Wilderson and Hartman 2003: 184). In addition, Wilderson and Hartman (2003) assert that thinking about the position of the unthought reveals the ‘problem of crafting a narrative for the slave as subject’. This is because simply placing the oppressed/slave in a narrative ultimately resulted in his or her obliteration, “regardless of whether it was a leftist narrative of political agency” (Wilderson and Hartman 2003: 184). Methodologies position themselves as speaking for the oppressed while at the same time silencing them through the sanitisation of the west and all its misdeeds on the global south. This is no surprise as this is why methodologies were developed to begin with; to make valid the ‘problematisation’ of

the native (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2017). Imbadu as a decolonial method was developed as a means to centre the narratives of the oppressed, from their context and based on their positionality.

1.7.1 Imbadu as a Decolonial Method

Through the development of Imbadu as a decolonial method I hope to allow those in conversation in this study to speak from their context. The need for Imbadu is prompted by the refusal to use Euro-American methods that have masked the dirtiness of research and its effects on the oppressed for the past five centuries (Wilderson and Hartman 2003; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2007). What I am doing in this study is a process of 'critical fabulation' that is described by Hartman (2008: 11) as the making "visible the production of disposable lives, to describe the resistance of the object". By developing a methodology from the underside, I make it possible for the occupants of the underside to theorise from their context. What I hope to achieve herein is to "topple the hierarchy of discourse" and flood it with a clash of different voices; particularly the voices of the unheard (Hartman 2008: 12).

I submit that this is not an exercise of choice but one of necessity. This is how we unmask the global order and show it for all its dirtiness. This study and thus method allow blackness to position its own pain by entrenching it in scientific discourse, thereby making visible the narratives of those who exist on the margins of the academy (Hartman 2008). The development and use of a decolonial or contextual method is necessary, as those methods that have pathologised us cannot liberate us or at the very least speak for us. Hartman (2008: 12) teaches us that the process of 'critical fabulation' allows us to "listen to mutters and oaths and cries of the commodity", the non-human. For this reason, Imbadu as a decolonial method serves the purpose of "flattening the levels of discourse and confusing the narrator and speaker" (Hartman 2008: 12). The object, the unthought, the 'thing' begins to narrate its own 'thingification' thereby reigning terror on the global order. The word "Imbadu" is derived from a traditional meeting of amaXhosa where men gather at the family or chief's kraal to raise, discuss and solve issues that affect the village, clan or family. This practice is then conceptualised as the men 'badla imbadu' which is a process of intense debate/discussion of issues that are very crucial to the wellbeing of the village, clan or

family. The men would each stand, take off their hat, greet with their hands cupped together as a sign of respect and then raise their point. Debate would emanate from that one point as it would be discussed until all involved are satisfied that they have been heard and engaged.

In this study, the chosen intellectuals are seen as important members of the Black 'family/village'. They sit in a virtual kraal and discuss issues that are crucial to the wellbeing of all and so they each take turns to voice their opinion while I, a familiar participant and archivist (uSibonda in isiXhosa), record their opinions for future use. Conversations in an Imbadu are never closed until a solution is found or a consensus is reached. Black Twitter can be seen in the same way, an on-going conversation on Blackness and what it means in post-94 South Africa. Extending on the tradition of Virtual Ethnography, a methodology through which researchers use "lurking" on internet users as a data collection technique (Steinmetz 2012: 27). Imbadu not only imposes racialisation/Blackness as an important variable for study, unlike VE, but also prompts the researcher to take a virtual 'seat' and be part of the conversation, to come as they are to the 'table'. In short, whereas the researcher is a silent observer of virtual ethnography, Imbadu allows the researcher to be a counted participant whose views are of similar weight to all the others. In this way, the 'case-study' is not observed by a 'God-like' figure but the researcher's own membership in the race-group allows for better interpretation of phenomenon.

1.7.2 Collecting Data

The data for the study were collected on Twitter, from the account postings of the chosen intellectuals. Blackness can be studied from various angles and at various levels, the trajectory of this study was chosen by myself based on predetermined themes and available literature. The chosen tweets were purposively selected based on how applicable they were to the study. As I was part of the conversation through analysing the Black condition, I was able to select relevant tweets and use them in the study. Dana, Mazwai and Msimang were afforded the liberty of individual expression and this exercise made it impossible to "thematise" their tweets as one would know that humans are multi-dimensional in nature and are concerned about different things

at different times. The fact that they are Black intellectuals who speak on the Black condition often, one cannot assume that they would do so at the exact same time all the time. It was possible that one would tweet only once a week while the other would tweet multiple times a day. It was also possible that some of their tweets were not applicable to the study, they would then be disregarded. The selected tweets range in time between 2017 and 2018. The data collection and write up for the study occurred mostly in real time, due to the unconventional way in which it was done.

The unpredictable nature of the study also prompted me to analyse situations as they occurred, as Black Twitter changes constantly. This, ironically speaks true to the fact of Blackness; a poetic culmination between research and Black life. The accounts of the chosen intellectuals were monitored for a review of discourses on Blackness. Their views on race and racism, justice, blackness, feminism, and land ownership. The point of the study is to look at the role and positionality of Black public intellectuals in post-94 South Africa. This required a monitoring and recording of the Twitter posts of the chosen intellectuals on Black Twitter and the culmination of conversations between them, myself and literature. Because of the design of this study which imitates life, it was impossible to predict when anything would happen. I was active on Black Twitter as part of conversations and discourse between January 2017 and July 2018. It was a deliberate act on my part to have this study be messy, raw, uncomfortable and unorthodox; much like blackness.

1.7.3 Data analysis and interpretation

I screenshot and stored Black Twitter as part of imbadu conversations in order to ensure that I could go back and make confirmations while doing analysis. The study, literature and I set the tone for issues/themes that are important. The chosen intellectuals regularly engaged in conversations about Blackness so monitoring, storing and analysing them was not difficult. This process involved observation; storing, coding in predetermined themes and reporting. According to Seal (2006), this can perhaps be explained as interpretative content analysis. Seal (2006) noted that, coding of data should be considered as “indexing”, where the researcher “marks sections of text according to whether they look like they are contributing to emerging themes”. A coding scheme can occur deductively from concerns, questions

hypotheses that already exist and inductively from the data themselves (Seal, 2006). David and Sutton (2011) claim that, deductive coding is the production of a list of categories by which data are to be coded prior to the collection of the data and inductive coding is the generation of codes after the collection and initial reading of the data. For this study, these kinds of coding are both applicable as I envisage themes that are most pertinent to Blackness, I was however open and excited to discover new themes that would arise from the data once collected. This study was born out of curiosity about the fact of blackness as means to understand the world from this positionality. This study allows the native to speak for herself, to position herself as a human being with problems and not the problem (Smith 1999), in this way the study is flexible, nuanced and raw.

1.8 Ethical considerations

This study employed the decolonial method hereby called Imbadu for obtaining and analysing the social media postings of the selected Black public intellectuals, these are public as they are posted for public consumption so there are no issues with invasion of privacy. The followers and members of Black Twitter are also engaged in public discourse which can be used for the purposes of research.

1.8.1 Confidentiality

Confidentiality will not be an issue for this study as all data will be sources from a public platform having been released by owners for public consumption.

1.8.2 Limitations

I focussed primarily on three Black intellectuals and have expanded the study to include the arts, activism, music, poetry, and writing as acts of intellectualising. I limited the number of chosen intellectuals to three at this point to allow enough time to monitor and record data. Because the study was on Twitter where conversations occur and change exponentially, it was important for me to keep the number of intellectuals low for management of the process. The three intellectuals were chosen from different spheres of arts- poetry, writing and music. They are linked together by their mutual passion for activism, feminism and justice. Their selection for this study was deliberate (purposive) because their views on the same social issue may vary, or be the same-

this makes the analysis varied and interesting. The chosen intellectuals are not representative of all intellectuals, not even those who work in similar industries. Therefore, the results of this study can only be generalised as far as the conceptual understanding of Blackness and the Black condition and not the positionality of intellectuals. This is because the Black condition in South Africa is not typically studied from this angle and is a very personal issue to think about meaning every individual will likely approach it differently. I mitigated these limitations by basing every piece of data in literature, this was necessary because this study is theoretical and application rich in nature.

1.9 Chapter Outline

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework- Fanon's Native Intellectual Consciousness

Chapter 3: Living in Black: The Positionality

Chapter 4: Black Solidarity and Black Twitter

Chapter 5: Ain't I a Black Woman?

Chapter 6: Ain't I a Black Public Intellectual?

Chapter 7: Ain't I Liberation?

Chapter 8: Conclusion

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK- FANON'S NATIVE INTELLECTUAL CONSCIOUSNESS

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I explore the concept of the "public intellectual" in relation to the thought of Frantz Fanon. I examine the Black intellectual who is formed, functions and works in racist, sexist and neo-colonial contexts while burdened with a conditions of death in blackness. Fanon ([1952] 2008) teaches us that the Black condition in the colonial and neo-colonial order is one of non-being; it is a space of non-existence; below that of animals. The Black intellectual I am concerned with here is one that acknowledges the colonial wound that she brings with as she enters spaces of intellectual labour. I examine here an intellectual who like Fanon, is aware of the violence of the westernised university and seeks to mitigate its impact by working with the people. This chapter serves as the launching pad for the establishment and adoption of an inclusive, "Fanonian" description of the Black intellectual that is needed to continue the struggle from henceforth.

Firstly I seek to characterise the Black intellectual by asserting that this is an individual who unapologetically expresses the needs of her people for true liberation from oppressive systems, she works with her people at the moment of henceforth. I then delve into the schizophrenic existence of the Black woman as an intellectual and the perpetual state of war she finds herself in as she navigates a neo-colonial world that holds her in contempt and a community of her own that dismisses her. Secondly, I examine the relationship of the intellectual and the people, her people. This is necessary to understand because the people tend to be weary of westernised intellectuals. I thirdly position decolonial consciousness as a necessary state of being for an intellectual who wants to see change in the Black condition. This, I posit, is an intellectual who has performed Fanon's "resignation" from the westernised university's forced 'denigrification'. She thinks, speaks, works, and intellectualises from blackness without apology.

2.2 Fanon's Native Intellectual Consciousness

At first glance, the native intellectual as we know him is a formation emanating from the throws of colonial domination. He is formed as a result of efforts at 'civilising the other' through western education. Fanon ([1961] 1990: 120) teaches us that, at the moment of decolonisation, it is the first cohort of western educated natives that take the lead in sectors like business, agriculture, administration and teaching. This new middle class is usually handed 'power' by the colonising country in order to present a show of 'Black face'; to give the illusion of a completed process of decolonisation. Fanon ([1961] 1990) claimed that, this class has no economic power and often depends on the mother country for financial support. This cohort is immersed in the bourgeoisie lifestyle of the mother country which it believes it has replaced in the colony. Fanon ([1961] 1990): 175) further asserts that because the native intellectual is educated in the west, he has been baptised in the art of being disparaging towards his native culture. He has bought into the notion that the colony was a dark place, with dark people and that colonisation was a mission meant to bring light into this darkness.

The native intellectual looks at 'men of culture' with disapproval, embarrassment and pity while he is occupied with French, German and English literature. These are the intellectuals, Fanon ([1961] 1990) shows us, who claim to speak as both "Senegalese and French" or "Ghanaian and English". These intellectuals' knowledge of Black history is often limited to what they have been taught in the mother country. This leads to a consciousness that lacks substance, critical thinking and awareness. However, Fanon ([1961] 1990) teaches that upon the intellectual's return to the land and his people, this utopian view of the western world starts to slowly dissolves. The confrontation with the realities of colonisation and the observation of his people's fights against domination jolt the native intellectual out of his 'western worship' and begin to change his attitude. Additionally, the native intellectual begins to realise that his efforts at assimilating to whiteness have not worked and that he needs to join his people in the struggle for liberation.

The native intellectuals learn that, with all its perceived supremacy, the white man's culture does not offer him any anchorage but guarantees his disconnection from his people (Fanon [1961] 1990: 175). He realises that he is the personification of contradiction, as the being of the colonised can never occupy a space reserved for the coloniser. Fanon ([1961] 1990: 175) asserts that the native intellectual "not only turns himself into the defender of his people's past, he is willing to be counted as one of them, and henceforward he is even capable of laughing at his past cowardice". This realisation, Fanon ([1961] 1990: 175) argues, is painful and difficult but is very necessary. Failure for the native intellectual to achieve this realisation breeds individuals "without an anchor, without a horizon, colourless, stateless, and rootless-a race of angels". This shows us that, a native intellectual who is not rooted in his own people is a floating object who cannot be engaged at the moment of henceforth. Fanon ([1961] 1990: 178) posits that it is possible to trace the various stages of evolution in the life of the native intellectual. In the first stage, he proves his assimilation to white culture. His intellectual and creative work reflect those of the occupying power, his inspiration clearly traceable to Europe. In the second stage, the intellectual is disturbed; he makes the decision to remember who he is. His works begin to resemble those of a searching man, but because he is disconnected from his people he delves mostly in the past of his people.

The third and final stage, the native intellectual; who has, "tried to lose himself in his people and with the people will shake the people, the native intellectual becomes the awakener of his people, through fighting literature, poetry, song and dance. This last stage is called the fighting phase" (Fanon [1961] 1990: 179). The native intellectual's consciousness begins to change, he becomes more militant in word and in deed. He refuses to accept the subordinate place of his people as natural and demands a fight that will culminate in liberation. Fanon ([1961] 1990) therefore calls for native intellectuals who are rooted in Blackness, for any alternative is tantamount to treason.

We see this when he asserts that the culture that should be emphasised is Negro-African culture and not national culture as the latter is far more shallow and subject to critique, particularly because it exists as a result of the colonial encounter. The native intellectual therefore, may be formed in the western world or westernised university; but he comes back to his culture and people once he gets away from white culture.

The native intellectual begins this process of returning to his people once he looks out at his continent and sees the degradation, loss, savagery that has been induced by colonisation. He decides right then that the imposed supremacy of white culture is as a result of the depraved acts of a murderous civilisation. Fanon ([1961] 1990) seems to address here a native intellectual that has been educated in the western or westernised university, one who works in traditional intellectual spaces. Fanon ([1961] 1990) asserts that it is important for the native intellectual to be immersed in blackness, with his people in order to achieve success for his people's struggle. In articulating the role of the native intellectual, Fanon ([1961] 1990) warns that the native intellectual should be one with the people and that he should learn from the people instead of dispensing orders at oppressed people. Furthermore, Fanon ([1961] 1990) posits that western education leaves the intellectual unbeknownst of the self and in search of himself. He can only regain this self-knowledge through intimacy with his people "who's collective intellectual and physical abilities inspire and intimidate the intellectual". The intellectual becomes a part of the people once the realisation that no level of education or economic advancement set him apart, that he too shares blackness which is fabricated as commodity or disposable waste. This realisation results in a shift in the consciousness of the intellectual.

Fanon ([1961] 1990) concerns himself with a native intellectual that is at first divorced from Blackness but later finds his way back to it, with the help of his people; one who becomes a champion for justice on behalf of his people while working with them. The latter characterisation of this intellectual is very similar to the one chosen for this study, in that the chosen intellectual is immersed in Blackness, she works with her people and is guided by their hopes and dreams in her activism. Fanon ([1961] 1990) does not concern himself with the Black public intellectual or an organic intellectual. One can assume that this is a reflection of his time. He does however make the distinction between intellectualising as a westernised individual and as a 'man of culture' when he posits that the intellectual starts off by undermining if not hating the man of culture but later realises his value in the preservation of culture, history and the knowledge of his people. Fanon ([1961] 1990) asserts that the native intellectual is a product of westernised university education, in the mother country or the colony and he is content in this space until the realisations mentioned above occur. The intellectual I am concerned with is not defined by her education but I make greater emphasis on her

immersion in Blackness, her concern for the Black condition and her activist work with her people. The Black public intellectual is concerned with articulating the pain, hopes and dreams of her people and not with the accolades that come with her intellectual labour. She is willing to put her body and soul on the line if it guarantees her people's liberties and liberation. One can argue that the Black public intellectual forms as a result of the realisation that the native intellectual has failed or needs support in the quest of the people. The Black public intellectual may disagree with the native intellectual but they both want to see the Black nation free.

2.3 What is a Black Public Intellectual?

This section examines the meaning of intellectualising from a Black body. I provide a narrative that juxtaposes a number of definitions from different scholars in an attempt to understand the Black public intellectual. In brief, I have argued that Fanon ([1961] 1990) posits native intellectuals as a bourgeoisie class that takes the reigns of national leadership after formal colonisation has ended. This class usually consists of individuals who were chosen and sent for education in universities in the mother country, as though in preparation for future leadership. Fanon ([1961] 1990) argues that, this group of new bourgeoisie intellectuals suffer from blatant western worship to the extent that they feel ashamed to be associated with the "savages" who are their people. On the contrary, contemporary scholars have defined the term "intellectual" widely for a number of reasons. I will provide an operational definition for this study at a later stage but first it is imperative that I engage with existing definitions coined by other scholars.

I will first engage with Gramsci (2014) and his contributions to the debate, he argues that, scholars tend to make the mistake of limiting 'the intellectual' to one who chooses to practice intellectualism as a social function either as a teacher, doctor, writer or artist and exclude the proletariat or working class who are perceived to be outside of the intellectual realm. In this case, the intellectual is limited to one who has undergone formal training in a university or college. This view supports Fanon's ([1961] 1990) assertions that, the new bourgeoisie intellectual looks down on his people and does not regard them as thinking beings. Gramsci (2014) finds this definition too limiting and rather problematic because it disregards indigenous knowledge systems that are

predominantly possessed by oppressed societies who did not or choose to forgo university training. In this vein, he divides intellectuals into two broad categories based on formation and function; first, he claims that there are ‘traditional’ professional intellectuals who function in the literary, scientific and artist fraternity. This kind of intellectualism is said to take a position “in the interstices of society and has a certain inter-class aura about it but it derives ultimately from past and present class relations" (Gramsci 2014). Thus, intellectualism recognises the intersections of class, race and gender and how these will affect one’s intellectual activity. This means that, intellectuals of colour or those from indigenous communities bring with them baggage every time they enter university spaces. This is so because they have histories of oppression and suffering that force them to function in two opposed worlds at the same time. In order to succeed in the world in which they work they have to put on a respectability face.

The second kind of intellectuals are described as ‘organic intellectuals’, these Gramsci (2014) argues, are those intellectuals who are responsible for “directing the ideas and aspirations of the class to which they organically belong”. These intellectuals are not distinguished by any job characteristic in their class but by their contribution to their community in the economic, social and ideological sense (Gramsci, 2014). I would stretch this definition to decentre ‘class’ and replace it with ‘racial group’ as the arguments at hand revolve around race. The definition would then encompass both “native” intellectuals who have not necessarily been trained in universities as well as those who have. Intellectualism in different oppressed societies in general, and African society in particular is not determined by the number of years one spends behind colonial books, but by the experience one has gained over years of working, learning from elders and just *being* in the community.

I seek to expand the definition of intellectualism to include indigenous knowledge systems among voices in the ‘multi-verse’ of knowledge. I hope to expand intellectualism to encompass the arts, activism and other spaces currently ignored and dismissed or relegated as ‘Black spaces’ in neo-colonial hierarchies. A great number of professional intellectuals are usually nurtured and formed by the bourgeoisie class and its privilege. They therefore work to serve the needs and desires of this class as captains of industry and specialist technicians for the class from which they benefit.

The argument I make therefore, is that as professional intellectuals are specialist in their fields, organic intellectuals should be accorded the same status as they are specialist in the conditions of their people and their immediate environment. These intellectuals can then be characterised as “organic native intellectuals’ not to be ‘othered’, or ‘inferiorised’ but to emphasise the importance of their work for the oppressed as well as to position them as captains of their communities as Gramsci (2014) observed. There have been concerns coming from the Black community questioning the need and relevance of professional intellectuals in the Black community when it seems like injustices against Black bodies have not ceased even in their presence. These would be intellectuals who are not bound by university red tape but offer commentary on the lived experiences of Black people without fear of being ostracised or discredited.

Boynton asserts that, ‘Black academic teacher-writer-activists’ have ‘taken the reins that many whites have dropped or ignored and done much more for social progress in recent years’. This description of the Black intellectual offers the many roles played by Black intellectuals, who often do not have the option of choosing one or the other due to lived experiences and observed injustices. Boynton also notes one of the major factors that lead to the formation of Black intellectuals, the fact that white academics have no stake in speaking on the injustices visited upon people of colour because they benefit from the system as it is and so Black academics are jolted out of their comfort zones to address these injustices themselves. Boynton asserts that the term ‘Black public intellectual’ does not just imply cognitive activity but also contains an element of performing a social service.

This description depicts the multi-layered existence of Black intellectuals who have to function in many roles at the same time. Cusick (2009) asserts that in its origin, the intellectual was seen as one who was engaged in the public realm. Cusick (2009) claims that the public intellectual “was a writer, informed by a string moral impulse, who addressed a general, educated audience in accessible language about the most important issues of the day”. Though this is a simplistic view of the public intellectual, this definition has offered a launching pad for the establishment of intellectuals who would later expand this term and its roles. Lending a voice on the relevance of public intellectuals and the work they do, Posner claims that, the typical public intellectual is

‘a safe specialist’, one who analyses society and addresses non-specialist audiences on matters of broad public concern. These definitions so far, have looked into the teacher, writer, activist, and social justice advocate roles of public intellectuals which are all vital in the Black community. The definitions as provided by Posner, Cusick (2009), and Boynton, however, emphasise on the public intellectual having or speaking to an audience within or outside of the Black community. It is important to note that addressing a captive audience is not always possible, as Black intellectuals, especially in the academy tend to have no audience at all if they speak truth to power about the injustices visited on the oppressed Black community. The emphasis on speaking to an audience may breed populism as intellectuals have to compete for the spotlight in order to perform for an audience as the definition suggests. In this regard, Gordon (1991) provides a distinct difference between popular intellectuals and public intellectuals when he claims that popular intellectuals are those that are well known and well liked in the academy and the media. Whereas public intellectuals, who are often not popular are public intellectuals because of the “the nature of their work, which addresses issues that have an impact on the communities in which they live and conditions of these intellectuals’ roles in such communities”.

Gordon (1991) further asserts that, popular intellectuals tend to display the same characteristics as charismatic leaders in the Black community, who are largely driven by their own egos than the desire to find lasting solutions to people’s problems. This is not to discredit those public intellectuals who are popular but caution against using the people’s struggle for fame and fortune. Many times Black intellectuals tend to occupy the “outsider” zone in the Black community; I ascribe this disconnection to mistrust and suspicion. The Black intellectual tends to be viewed with suspicion owing to the manner in which he comes to be. Perhaps now is a good time to interrogate the process that leads to the formation of the Black intellectual. West (1985) argues that, Black intellectuals are created and nurtured in the white university, where Blackness is constantly degraded and derailed and therefore the intellectual is left with little choice but to conceal her Blackness for respectability and opportunity. In addition to the white university, the media, different communities and discourse at large also nurture Black intellectuals and thereby influence the Black intellectual’s outlook on life. This is to say, as every intellectual is a political entity that is influenced by the various levels of society, her work gets shaped by these levels of society and so she serves

an agenda as required by those who nurture her. Additionally, intellectualism does not always pre-require a university degree, especially in the Black community where natural intelligence, age and experience carry greater weight. Maldonado-Torres (2016: 14) notes that, “education, including academic scholarship, national culture and the media” are usually the three areas in which coloniality and modernity tend to take hold and reproduce themselves. It can be assumed therefore that, intellectuals who have been exposed to colonial or modern forms of education, the media and national culture, are likely to perpetuate coloniality and modernity, although they may not realise that they are doing this. The choice of becoming an intellectual in the Black community seems to be an ‘act of self-imposed marginality’ as it guarantees an ‘outsider’ status in and out of the Black community. Having been trained in the white university and the white establishment as a whole, the work and politics of Black intellectuals tend to be discharged and disconnected from the people. The Black intellectual is always in this dilemma, she must deal with the white power structure that continues to ‘other’ her and the dim realities of the Black world at one and the same time (West, 1985).

This can only be successfully described as a constant state of schizophrenia. For her to succeed she must shed her Blackness and reveal her white mask, only when this is done can she be accepted into the white academy. Those who fail to undertake this activity are no better than the former; they harbour resentment for not being accepted by the white world. The Black intellectual fails to realise that, her mere presence in the white academy is revolutionary protest in and of itself; that she need not shed her Blackness and needs no acceptance in the neo-colonial academy. The task of the Black intellectual in the white establishment should not be that of defence, she must not feel the immense need to undo racist stereotypes and present a watered-down version of herself to make others comfortable in her presence.

The task of the Black intellectual should be that of undoing the mental damage done by centuries of misinformation and miseducation in the Black community. The task is to decolonise images of the people, for the people, working with the people (West 1985) and (Amin, 2015). ‘The people’ in this instance signifies the colonised/oppressed native whose home has been infiltrated by settlers, whose history is distorted daily in the white academy and whose presence is merely tolerated for

good measure. Said in Kom (2003: 44) asserts that, “the major choice faced by the intellectual is whether to be allied with the stability of the victors and rulers or-the more difficult path- to consider that stability as a state of emergency threatening the less fortunate with the danger of complete extinction. The task is to take into account the “experience of subordination itself, as well as the memory of forgotten voices and persons”. This is of paramount importance as a task to be assumed by the Black intellectual for the future of the oppressed Black native. Kom (2003) urges that, the Black intellectual should immerse herself in the struggles for democratic freedoms, economic, social and cultural progress in his native land and Africa as a whole. The Black intellectual of the not so distant past emerged during a time in which they had to devise an aesthetic based on vagueness and open margins in a society where racist stereotypes reigned supreme as ‘nature’; this is the kind of space the Black intellectual had to navigate in the past and many of the present (Posnock, 1998). As explained above, the motive of this study is to stretch the existing definitions of the ‘intellectual’ by examining existing conceptions in comparison to the needs of oppressed communities. This definition will be fashioned as an acknowledgment of ‘other ways of knowing’ that tend to be ignored in westernised spaces.

It is no surprise that different ways of knowing and ergo ways of intellectualising have always existed in indigenous communities before the European expansion and colonisation. Traces of this still exist in the present day, albeit the deliberate effort to prove otherwise. Like many parts of African society, the intellectual tradition of Black people has been diluted, changed or destroyed by the colonial encounter. One of the tasks for Black intellectuals then is to re-member the disintegrated intellectual traditions and re-claim them for generations of Black intellectuals to come. Like their modern counterparts, public intellectuals in African societies have always been leaders of communities.

Perhaps one of the major difference between the two is that African societies placed more importance on seniority in the community and experience in choosing intellectuals, whereas westernised civilisations and communities value western education more. Various arguments can be made as to which is the better option between the two but that is not my task at this moment, what I seek to look at instead is historic African intellectual tradition and how it was disregarded by European

‘mainstream’ intellectual thought leading to the ignorance of contemporary intellectual labour. In order to advance the cause of white supremacy, white settlers had to convince Black natives through Christianity and western education, that their tried and tested indigenous knowledge was nothing but folklore, superstition and that it was unscientific. This made it easier to entrench the inferiority complex that Black people are still battling to overcome today, where all forms of ‘Black knowledge’ are dismissed as ‘of low standard’ and ‘untested’ or are included in mainstream discourse only as accompanying knowledge that is used and discarded at will. The dismissal and disregard of all things non-western includes African languages as well many of which were successfully destroyed or marginalised by colonisers who made western languages the measure of intelligence and ‘civilisation’ leading to the loss of valuable indigenous knowledge. Africa is still grappling with the effects of over three centuries of formalised colonisation and apartheid that left the continent devastated on all fronts. One of these is the loss of faith and trust in organic intellectuals and the positioning of this role only in westernised university corridors.

As promised above that, for this study, I seek to compile a comprehensive and relevant definition that stretches those provided above and one that complements the African environment. I define an intellectual here is one who *uses her platform as a writer-artist-activist-leader-teacher-thinker to fight for the decolonial emancipation of Black people, she affirms and is affirmed by her blackness and unbound by gender, sexuality and religion*. This is the kind of Black intellectual who seeks justice for all oppressed communities without fear or favour, she understands that there are animosities and a lot of learning and unlearning to be done but she is willing to be present and go through these processes with her people. She knows that she will not always have an audience, at times, her audience will throw stones at her because of the work she does but she will persevere and display inspirational amounts of decolonial love and rage as posited by Maldonado-Torres (2016). She understands that Blackness has no audience, that no matter how loud and how often it screams ‘I cannot breathe’; Blackness is told to shut up and move on but she uses her platform to advance the cause of freeing her people. She takes time to retreat to refuel her spirit through her ancestors who strengthen her, but she gets up and continues the fight because the fight requires her. She wants to fight for Africa to rise, maybe not in her time but

certainly in her children's time. She seeks justice not only for herself but for the people who make her, her people.

2.4 The Black Intellectual and the People

Fanon ([1961] 1990) affirms for us that, the native intellectual does have a place among his people, but this place is afforded to him once he abandons the white man's culture completely. Fanon ([1961] 1990: 178) further posits that the native intellectual has to "find his countrymen". He added "finding your countrymen sometimes means to will to be a nigger… going back to your own people means to become a dirty wog to go native as much as you can" (Fanon [1961] 1990: 178). In the context of the native intellectual, 'going native' means embracing and taking part in all the 'native' things that the western world has taught him were 'savage, primitive and backward'. The process of finding his countrymen is also a process of finding himself. The relationship of the native intellectual with his people will improve once this is achieved, but first let us examine this relationship before process of 'nativity' begins.

Fanon ([1961] 1990: 85) shows us that the formation of the native intellectual owes to the decision of the occupying power, it is usually the generals of the settler society that choose 'worthy' natives to be educated in the mother country. This after they have usually served as clerks, administrators or security enforcers guarding the interests of the occupying power in the colony. Fanon ([1961] 1990) asserts that this newly established native elite class is the one that leads the people into revolution in calls for decolonisation. It is this class that leads nationalists parties that eventually "liberate" the people in hopes of replacing the colonial generals, presidents and ruling class. Fanon ([1961] 1990: 178) however, warns that, the elite owing to their colonial education fetishise the concept of 'organisation' so much that "organisation will take precedence over a reasoned study of colonial society".

This leads to a misdiagnosis of the problems of 'post-colonial' societies and peoples. Fanon ([1961] 1990: 85) further argues that, because the new ruling native intellectuals have not taken the time to understand the impact of domination on the oppressed, they import ruling methodology, political and economic structures from the mother country without the slightest modification. These structures are by design,

meant to identify the native as the problem; and so they perform this task perfectly in the hands of the native intellectual. The native intellectual then is seen to be validating a system that permits the existence of extreme poverty alongside obscene wealth, slavery alongside exploitative classes. This is where the breakdown in the relationship between the native intellectual and his people begins. Fanon ([1961] 1990: 89) teaches that, mistrust between the native intellectual and his people ensues, the native intellectual "dresses like a European, he speaks the European's language, works with him, sometimes even lives in the same district; so he is considered by the peasant as a turncoat who has betrayed everything that goes to make up national heritage". Because of the disconnection from his people, history and heritage, the Black intellectual is always in a state of uncertainty; he feels inadequate for the white establishment and can never truly fit in with those who look like him, his people. Black intellectuals constantly have to navigate the very thin line of gaining the approval of the white establishment in which they make a living, although more times than not this approval is gained through the betrayal of the people, his people.

Thus leaving the intellectual in a state of moral uncertainty where he has to question whether this acceptance surpasses the acceptance of his own people. How does one who benefits from the system speak against it, albeit having pulled himself up from the gutter of Blackness by the skin of his teeth? How does he discourage those still in the gutter from joining the establishment when he seems to have succeeded in it? Fanon ([1961] 1990: 89) shows us that the wedge is drawn between the native intellectual and his people by a lack of trust, his people do not trust him because they see him as a traitor who gets on well with the occupying settlers and their colonial system. The antagonistic relationship between the native intellectual and his people is then used by settlers to sew further division in hopes of destabilising the colony more. The colonisers are aware that if the native intellectual "goes negro" again, they will lose him to his people; and so they dedicate time and resources to reinforcing to him the supremacy of their culture and the barbarity of his. It is also known that once the native intellectual "finds" his countrymen again, he will be closely confronted by the results of occupation on his continent, he will begin to raise hard questions and thus abandon the white men's culture that he has spent many years learning.

It is thus clear; the relationship of the native intellectual and his people is closely managed by the occupying power. At the moment of reckoning, the native intellectual learns that as posited by Du Bois (1994: 7), “Black people are judged by their skins and not by their souls; their lives often grow choked and deformed”. He learns that he is not merely an intellectual educated in the classics and literature, but he is a Black intellectual clouded by the colour of skin. This should not be a shock to learn as the whole colonial project was rooted in the dehumanisation of Black people that no matter how much they learnt the master’s ways, they could never be acceptable as fully human but always as ‘human-becoming’. This is to say, the Black intellectual should not distance himself from his people in an attempt to assimilate to the dominant society. Black intellectuals tend to lose the respect and support of the people, due only to their absence from and perceived disconnection to the people’s daily struggles. Where Black intellectuals are involved in people’s struggles, it is feared that they use the people and their struggles for upward mobility and recognition while neglecting the people and this leads to suspicion where Black intellectuals are concerned. In this instance, it seems the only solution for the Black intellectual is to come back to himself, to come back to the community that made him and to work towards people’s liberation with the people (Fanon [1961] 1990).

Presenting a similar argument, Biko (2004) later posits that the first step in building the vehicle for change is to “make the Black man come to himself, to pump life back into his empty shell, to infuse him with pride and dignity, to remind him of his complicity in the crime of allowing himself to be misused and therefore letting evil reign supreme in the country of his birth”. This is not to blame the oppressed for their predicament but to free them of mental slavery and the inferiority complex imposed by centuries of oppression and cruelty. The intellectual quickly learns that colonial education does not solve oppressed people’s problems but a deliberate effort to gain and use indigenous knowledge from the people, those who know best will liberate the intellectual from their own shackles.

This is the intellectual who gains my attention here, one who is not bound by the white academy and is not performing respectability politics on issues of importance to her people. It is worth noting however, that this calibre of intellectual can be described as “few and far in-between” hence the urgent need for this conversation. Fanon ([1961]

1990: 119) suggests that, the educated or intellectual class of former colonies after the process of decolonisation is but a replacement of the master with all the master's systems left in place to continue to subjugate the people. There is a disconnection between the intellectual class and the people, and this lack of significant links together with their laziness and cowardice are sited as producing "tragic mishaps at the decisive moment of the struggle" (Fanon [1961] 1990: 119). The Black intellectual class in the former colonised world is usually one that has gone through western education, in preparation for replacing the oppressors during the process of decolonisation to whom this process only means the transfer of the unfair advantages of the colonial period to native hands. This class is underdeveloped in its thinking and in power; it largely emulates the educated class of the mother-country from whom it takes its lessons. This lack of imagination leads to the economic and cultural neo-colonisation of native lands at the expense of the people (Fanon [1961] 1990). In addition to its lack of imagination and ideas, the educated class also tends to live by itself and cuts itself off from the people, leading to incapacity to think in terms of the problems of the people but this class in essence become managers of Western owned enterprises thereby making a brothel of their country. This leads to a collapse in the relationship between the intellectual and the people, which becomes a very unstable one.

Spillers (1994) provides an apt analysis of one of the major crises of Black intellectuals when she argues that, today's Black intellectual easily becomes distracted with matters of non-importance, almost 'like candy taken from a child' she is co-opted into the shiny lights of publicity and 'pin-up' which ultimately lead to the abandonment of the people's struggles. She asserts that the Black intellectual should first seek to heal herself before undertaking the process of healing her people. It becomes clear therefore, that all those who have been exposed to colonial conquests in various forms, are in need of healing from the devastating impact of this period. For one to then succeed in their quest for intellectual life, one in which the goal is to free her people, the intellectual needs to acknowledge that she too needs healing.

To invoke Biko (2004), the Black intellectual needs to be freed of colonial-imposed inferiority complex, fear and timidity in order for her to speak the truth of the experiences of her people. She needs to realise that if she chooses to undertake this task, she likely will not receive popularity or praise in the white academy, she is more

likely to gain grave criticism. The intellectual should be comforted in knowing that this in itself is a process of healing for her and her people, and so she needs to 'resign' from the violent system of the white establishment in order to 'speak from Blackness', as suggested by Maldonado-Torres (2016). The voice of the Black intellectual, in order for her to speak from blackness, will be ignited by the undying people of her people who inspire her to fight on. This is why the Black intellectual cannot work in silo, she needs to be with her people, thinking, speaking, healing and learning together. The Black intellectual needs to find the revolutionary spirit in her body and those of her people, after an observation of the dire state of her people. The Black intellectual, as alluded to above, awakens the spirit of revolution in her people, she should highlight not only for the people themselves but also for the world that the period of slumber has come to an end (Spillers 1994). It is clear to the people, for example, that the myth of the "rainbow nation" has unravelled at its unstable seams, the Black intellectuals and the people are to hold hands and undertake the continued struggle for the people's emancipation that is seen as unattained in 1994. While the establishment presents a picture of "Black progress" which is meant to pacify the struggle, with Black intellectuals being at the centre of this progress.

The Black intellectual should be inspired by the African philosophy of "Ubuntu" in which the progress of some is denounced outright as progress to none. This is not to argue for the homogeneity of Black life or the Black experience, but for the interconnectedness of our struggles and our experiences. The argument here is that Black intellectuals are imperfect, that they too need to undergo an intense process of healing and that this imperfection can cause conflict between them and their people and divide the struggle. Above all, Black intellectuals are a necessary and valuable component of the struggle, once they have begun "self-healing and introspection" as Fanon ([1961] 1990: 159) suggests that, "with the people" they can then lead the people into the struggle.

The presence and activity of Black intellectuals is not only commendable but also necessary; the future of the continent depends on this. As Fanon ([1961] 1990: 159) declares, "every generation must discover its mission, fulfil it, or betray it", I translate this in a specific context and apply it to Black intellectuals that they have to discover their mission and fulfil or betray it. She may work and profess in universities but she

knows that her place is with her people. I realise that in many societies university education is a very important of upward mobility and success and that those who choose this path should not be forsaken or discarded.

Cusick (2009) provides good narratives regarding the role of public intellectuals in the past and perhaps a blueprint for future intellectuals. She claims that public intellectuals are not driven by the need for recognition but are born out of vocalising about social injustices, usually towards a certain group of people. Public intellectuals have a public responsibility that should integrate the "life of the mind and on-the-ground activism". Although Cusick (2009) carries the widely accepted definition of public intellectuals as operating within university corridors which is disputed here; her emphasis on social responsibility is relevant as specified above from Frantz Fanon's point of view. Cusick (2009) argues that, Black intellectuals have a wider responsibility that their counterpart. They act as teachers, motivators, therapists and sometimes even siblings for their student. This is because they are usually the only people who can relate with their student's lived experiences in the westernised university. Speaking on the responsibility of Black intellectuals, Adams (2005) urges Black intellectuals to speak the truth of blackness, to centre blackness in their work not only for the academy but also for Black students who deserve visibility in the academy.

Adams (2005) is firm in the belief that, the baggage of Black pain that is carried in the bodies of Black intellectuals is worthy of being brought into discourse. She asserts that Black intellectuals have a responsibility to their Black students who need this discourse in formalised university spaces. Intellectualism is practiced in a number of ways, some use research and writing, others activism and action, others use art forms like music, drama, dance, and poetry. This is to say, in conjunction with her people, the Black public intellectuals will establish the needs and aspirations of her people and work towards achieving these. Matera (2010) urges us to contest and redefine intellectualism for ourselves as we imagine a new world and not allow colonial concepts to limit our view of our own world. I have suggested in this section that the Black intellectual is nothing without her people, the public who make her and are in turn influenced by her. The question therefore begs, what does the concept of the "public" mean for the Black who is discarded from humanity?

2.5 The Idea of the Public

"*Look! A Negro! Maman, a Negro!*"… and thus the Black is created by the gaze of the "other" (Fanon [1952] 2008: 91). Fanon ([1952] 2008) shows us how the white man creates a distinguishing circle around the Black man in order to set him apart from all things 'normal', 'real' or 'acceptable'. The Negro in all public interactions is a strange and unwelcome 'appearance', almost as if the myth of big-foot has come alive. The Black man does not simply enter public spaces as a man, he enters as his whole race and all his ancestors. He is an object to be dissected by the glaring gaze of the 'other' (Fanon [1952] 2008). The public, Fanon ([1952] 2008) teaches us, is uncomfortable for the Black man; unsure of his belonging in it and consistently aware of his being in it. This means, the Black is aware that he is unwanted in this space, signalled by the white man crossing the street to avoid him or the white woman clutching her purse, yet he can feel through stares just how visibly present he is in this space.

The Black man comes to public spaces as a creation of whiteness, "woven out of a thousand details, anecdotes and stories" (Fanon [1952] 2008: 91). He appears as a representative of "cannibalism, backwardness, fetishism, racial stigma, and slave traders" (Fanon [1952] 2008: 92). Because of this, the public is a traumatic space for the Black; it symbolises his subsequent hypervisibility as a race and invisibility as an ontological being. Because of the Black men's lack in ontological density, the 'public' is then reserved for "normals", whites. "*Maman, look, a Negro; I am scared*!"… "*Ssh! You'll make him angry*…" and so the 'other' fixes the Black in savagery, cannibalism, violence and hostility (Fanon [1952] 2008: 93).

The Black is then forced into a constant state of performing niceness, civility, humanity and intelligence. When in public spaces, the Black is under the constant surveillance of the objectifying gaze of the 'other' who appears to be looking for every reason to discard him from humanity once more. This gaze, as Fanon ([1952] 2008) shows us has the ability to create, destroy and recreate the Black as it sees fit. Fanon ([1952] 2008) adds that the gaze solidifies that "*the Negro is an animal, the Negro is bad, the Negro is wicked, the Negro is ugly; look, a Negro*…" "*Maman, the Negro is going to eat me*." Fanon ([1952] 2008) teaches us that this is how the being of the Black comes to the world, ergo to public spaces. The public, as far the Black is concerned, is

tantamount to public lynching over and over and over again. The Black dies and awakens right there in presence of the ever analysing white gaze. This is how the Black experiences the public, as an externalised being who is hyper-visible and invisible simultaneously. *"Look Maman… a Negro*" symbolises a being who is so visible that he requires the audience of the "normals" but also so invisible that his feelings are not spared as insults are hurled at him. In state vocabulary, the "public" is a term used to describe a particular country's citizenry or population; the term is typically used in political and state proclamations when citizens are not differentiated on any grounds. Warner (2002) argues that, people tend to assume that the terms 'the public' and 'a public' refer to the same thing when in fact they differ in many contexts. These terms are easily confused because people want to believe that they are both inclusive of all citizens when they actually do not. He continues to specify that generally the public is a 'kind of social totality' where people are organised under some banner, so they can be a national public or societal public. The important thing to note is that once there is a public into which one belongs or affiliates, it means there are others outside into which they do not belong.

The public and its leadership can see the 'public sphere' then as an either physical or virtual space where issues of 'public interest' are discussed. This herein presents an almost perfect picture of a society in which there are no differences, everything functions within set common rules and boundaries, and everyone wants to achieve similar goals. This however is not the idea of the South African public. In this section, I make arguments of the existence and prioritisation of 'a public' at the expense of 'the public'. A society in which four groups of homogeneous publics (Africa, Coloured, Indian and White) have been systematically manufactured and sustained and whose interests are determined by group affiliation. The legacy of colonial-apartheid in South Africa can be seen visibly in the organisation of society that divides 'the public' into groups of differentiated lumps who are organised by race and ethnicity.

Zondi (2017), presenting a class at the Unisa Decoloniality Summer School argued over the years that Africans before the colonial conquest were a fluid nation who moved freely around the continent, re-establishing themselves in different communities/groups/ethnicities every time they moved. This meant that even identity in Africa was a fluid configuration that was determined by where a particular family

had settled at any point in time. This is not to assume that Africa was a utopian land where there was no conflict, this is to say that the arrival of Europeans and their capitalist motives elevated and fuelled those conflicts. After the colonial conquest, the Africans public was divided into “tribes” and “ethnic groups” for better administrative activities, which forced otherwise fluid communities into rigid tribes and ethnic identities out of which people could not move. One cannot but emphasise the disengagement and disorientation this imposed on natives and how this has disrupted the development of the continent and its people (Cesiare 1972). This kind of organisation is more large-scale but it is also very evident in the different countries on the continent, white settlers during colonial-apartheid divided the country into different sections in which they placed and locked down natives based on their ethnic groupings and called these ‘homelands’.

In this arrangement, the Xhosa were effectively banished to the Eastern Cape and parts of the Western Cape where they needed an official document to exit or enter other parts of the country. The Zulu were banished to the Natal, also needing state documents to visit other parts of the country and this applied to other ethnic groups as well. This arrangement and division, over centuries has caused major dismemberment of African society and fuelled tribal tensions that persist to this day. Whites were then placed strategically across the country, in leafy suburbs close to the town or city, far enough from blacks but close enough to keep a close eye on their destruction. Fanon ([1952] 2008) argues that, the Black represents a moral dilemma for a world that seeks to destroy him; he is overwhelmingly visible and invisible at the same time. He is a ‘beast of burden’ whose inferiority has been decided upon by the ‘other’.

He faces a difficult but obvious choice, he can either “denegrify” and be assimilated into whiteness or he can resign from the system and affirm his blackness (Maldonado-Torres 2016), Fanon ([1952] 2008); thereby creating, affirmed and being affirmed by his ‘public’. It is clear that a Black who has not gone through the process of ‘denegrification’ cannot and does not belong in the public as we know it. When the Black has not ‘denegrified’ then, the republic is clearly not set up to serve his interests instead it actively seeks to destroy him. Every activity undertaken by the public is therefore said to serve a certain interest, a public interest. Sorauf (1957), argue that, it is impossible to understand the term “public interest” in neat and precise formulation

as it acquires different meanings depending on use- and abuse. He adds that over the years the term has acquired a “pragmatic and functional” definition. Sorauf (1957) entertains four definitions and explains them in detail; I will a give brief discussion of these here. First, this concept is described as ‘*the public interest as commonly-held value*’ this comprises of commonly held interests or values and they are ‘distinguished by the large number of people who share them’ or at least, as a majority interest. If a decision is said to be ‘in the public interest’ then it should serve the ends of the whole public and not just some of them. Secondly, the concept is seen as ‘*the wiser superior interest*’ which is held by its supporters with the belief that it commands a special place among interests because of its superior wisdom and desirability. An example we can use here is sufficient social support for the poor, which is supported by a majority as a wise and morally sound decision. Thirdly, public interest is seen a ‘*moral imperative*’ in which the concept is seen as public philosophy, the receipt of certain behaviours as morally acceptable and in the public interest (Sorauf 1957).

Freedom, justice, property and the brotherhood of man are listed as examples. The fourth and last is the public interest as a ‘*balance of interests*’ where compromises and accommodations are reached between conflicting groups (Sorauf 1957). Looking at the definitions provided here, questions arise about whose ‘commonly-held values’ are upheld when public interest is considered as people of different races and ethnicities tend to value different things. However, the public interest is said to ‘lie very closely with middle-class interests’. In this instance usually, a national value system is devised and is said to cater for and accommodate all citizens but this is also problematic. In neo-colonial nation states, the so-called national values are in fact colonial values or the values of colonial masters that have remained ingrained even after formal colonialism has ended. The same argument applies for the moral imperative mentioned, whose morals are placed above others in the hierarchies of humanity, it also cannot be argued that “the majority rules” as in the South African scenario where the numerical majority is the influential and material minority.

To posit that the public interest is in fact in the interest of the middle class seems more likely. We can assume that in South Africa public interest means “whites and elite blacks” which means decisions taken in political and policy administration are in fact taken on behalf of and for whites as well elite blacks mainly and then everyone else.

Having ascertained who is present in the “public”, one can deduce that public interest is then served and performed for the benefit of those who actually belong in the public, while others receive leftovers once true occupants have had enough. As the public is the direct descendant of the republic in which blacks are but glorified unwelcome visitors, we can conclude that blacks are not welcome in the public either. Therefore, it is impossible for those who reside outside the realm of humanity, “civilisation” and the republic to expect to be catered for in these spaces. Warner (2002) proposes that subalterns are in essence ‘counterpublics’ as they are not fully welcome in the true public. When they are welcome; they are usually stigmatised and their issues ignored. He suggests the embracing of alternate spaces in which these ‘counterpublics’ can exist; these spaces will then serve as safe places for agency to be formed and subaltern issues discussed. Warner’s (2002) argument is that, ‘the public’ is meant to be a space where publics can rise up, speak, reject premises, demand answers, change sovereigns, support causes, give mandate for change, to be satisfied, to scrutinise public conduct and take role models. It is therefore difficult to imagine the oppressed involved in any of these activities if they are not welcome. Although I can see his point, perhaps because of contextual differences this might not apply here. Because the last thing South Africans should ever accept is whites having their “own” spaces on African soil, where Africans are pushed to the margins also in their so called “own” spaces. Of course safe spaces are important for the unadulterated performance of blackness for itself, by itself but these spaces should be infused in main discourse and not relegated to the margins where blackness has resided for centuries.

2.6 Decolonial Consciousness

To imagine a decolonial consciousness and to question whether or not it exists among Black public intellectuals, one must examine the conditions upon which consciousness in general is cultivated in the Black body. At birth, Biko (2004) teaches us, the Black meets the world from the point of view of the marginalised. The world tells him ‘where he to be born, to live, to go school, to receive healthcare, how much of an education he is to receive, where he will work and where will be buried’ (Biko 2004). These systems of oppression persist during and after formal colonisation has ended and are maintained by well-meaning liberal state policies. At birth, the Black body formulates a consciousness of marginality rooted in the traumatic experience of domination. After

the moment of decolonisation, the marginalised and suppressed remain aware of what it means to live under a state of administrative/political colonisation as they are of its lingering afterbirth, coloniality. The consciousness of the Black therefore, is an amalgam of trauma, inferiority complex, suppression, domination, and 'thingification' resulting from the centuries of occupation and domination. To be Black is to exist in a constant state of double-consciousness, to always see yourself through the eyes of another who views you with contempt and disdain (Du Bois 1994). To decolonise the consciousness is to free the Black of all feelings of insignificance and inferiority, as well as release the Black from the need to prove himself worthy to the 'other'. A decolonised consciousness allows the Black to *be;* on her own terms.

I argue here that decolonial consciousness is firmly rooted in Black consciousness as Fanon ([1952] 2008: 114) asserts that "Black consciousness is immanent in itself. I am not a potential of something; I am fully what I am. I do not have to look for the universal. There is no room for probability inside me. My Black consciousness does not claim to be a loss. It *is*. It emerges with itself." Fanon ([1952] 2008) expresses here the core of decolonial consciousness. A consciousness that is complete in and of itself while recognising and respecting 'others' as complete beings as well. For the Black public intellectual, this consciousness is achieved once he has "found his people" (Fanon [1952] 2008). In this work, Fanon ([1952] 2008) describes a native intellectual whose consciousness is wholly colonised; who exists to appease the master, to worship the master's culture, to mimic the master and to ultimately be the master.

While in this state of consciousness, the native intellectual rationalises the savagery of the master's ways who believes in his divine duty to 'civilise the natives'. The native intellectual buys into the rationale, sanitises the cruelty of the master and glorifies the master's ways. Because of this, the experiences of colonised people remain silenced and disregarded. The logic and structural remnants of coloniality and the struggles of the colonised did not end with the abolition of colonial administrations in the global South. In the same manner that the struggles against apartheid did not end when formalised apartheid ended. One cannot dispute the damage done by colonisation and coloniality on the psyche of its Black objects, the system has for centuries killed, raped, dispossessed and maimed Black people and then blamed them for these very crimes (Biko 2004). As a result, the amount of healing that is required at present in the

colonised world is understandable. Before I expand further, it is important that I set the scene of colonialism-coloniality and its impact on black people and how it has led to a colonised consciousness. Many understand colonisation, correctly so, as the conquest of native lands by European foreigners who embarked on various “civilising” and “modernising” missions across the world within the past 500 years. During these conquests, native lands, resources and humanity were stripped to where the native became a visitor in her own land. During this time, madness, death, rape were deliberately manufactured and normalised as natural conditions for natives. Colonisation is supposed to have ended in Africa 70 years ago, but it left parts of the continent with a more refined afterbirth called Apartheid that continued the very crimes against native Africans.

In essence, colonial-apartheid is a devil of the same kind where natives are concerned and the madness instilled in them by both systems continues to this day. This is where the concept of coloniality becomes evident for Africans today. Although technically colonisation ended, it left a social, human, economic and political order that entrenches global coloniality until present day. A system under which humans are positioned in hierarchical organisation based on race, gender, religion and sexual orientation. Coloniality is also evident in the social order of knowledge, power and being where native indigenous knowledge, spirituality and expressions of humanity and humanness are constantly overlooked for western modernity. Colonisation-coloniality positions black people as non-human or sub-human at best and therefore legitimises, condones and sometimes legalises the crude acts that are committed against black people.

It was and largely still is assumed that due to their inferior humanity black people cannot feel pain and do not have souls, this meant that it was/is in fact in their best interest to be exterminated and dispossessed of their lands and resources as they could not use them effectively. Decoloniality on the contrary then, demands that the world in its current state must fundamentally destruct in order for a new world to emerge, one that accommodates plural forms of knowledge, spirituality and existence. That the world must die a public and rapid death so that a new world can be born and a new slate to start over established. These demands cause major anxieties in those who benefit from the oppression of others, as they fear the loss of the mystique not

only in the understanding of their histories and civilisations but also of material possessions that were stolen from natives. Decoloniality demands a fundamental shift in worldviews and threatens to be an intensely fearful process, both for the coloniser and the colonised as both parties have some introspection to undergo. The calls for decoloniality have been echoed for as long as coloniality has existed, Africans have been engaged in the battle for emancipation since the arrival of the first ship of settlers. Biko, in the throes of the struggle against white domination in South Africa already asserted that the South African society needed to be torn apart and made anew when he demanded that the "white man will know that he is not superior and the Black should know that he is not inferior".

When decoloniality is achieved, these demands will become a reality and people will interact as equals who are all working towards a common goal, that of coexisting in harmony. There is no evidence at present of a decolonial nation state in the world; hence the demands have intensified in the global South. Those who continue to be dehumanised and oppressed are calling for a fundamental and rapid change of the world, as we know it. The anti-Black world is not taking these demands lightly, it is militating against Black and brown people, as a clear sign of how things have changed but have stayed the same. Consciousness in this context is as an awareness of one's environment and the conditions thereof, with all its joys and tribulations and a willingness to do something about these conditions. In this case, a Black intellectual who lives in an anti-Black world and continues to use her platform to question and challenge racial injustice is aware of her environment and is engaged in activism to change it.

Decolonial consciousness invokes and encourages new ways of thinking and of doing, it asserts itself as a thinking and acting entity that not only recognises differences in humanity but embraces them. Black public intellectuals are called upon to aspire to decolonise their consciousness, as this most desirable scenario is not yet achieved in all intellectuals. In the Black community, intellectuals are pulled in all directions as their communities demand that they represent them and global coloniality demands that they shed their blackness and assimilate to whiteness. Decolonial Black intellectuals are engaged in a highly controversial process, the reconfiguration of political

imagination, a state in which black people can freely and without prejudice “speak from blackness”.

Decolonial Black public intellectuals are engaged in thinking processes, they are thinking in terms that are not bound by colonial logic. This thinking process is highly taxing because essentially, these intellectuals are colonised and so every time they engage in decolonial imagination they have to commit social suicide, a process of shedding colonial selves in order to serve the people. As Grosfoguel (2016) posits, they have a ‘white western man living inside’ whose loud colonial voice they have to silence and disregard daily in order to do work that benefits the oppressed. These intellectuals are engaged in a decolonial rapture while living in coloniality, a rapture from the inside that translates to and changes everything on the outside.

Once an intellectual has undergone this process, has opened her eyes to the conditions of her environment, she can no longer keep quiet about the injustices visited on her people and the cause of said injustices. You see, once they know what the problem is, they cannot un-know it. These Black intellectuals can then begin to regain the trust of their people and be called on to lead the various struggles of the people. What is needed is a Black public intellectual who is ready, with all her might, to push a decolonial agenda. What the decoloniality cause needs are Black intellectual who are ready to engage in the affirmation of the Black self, one that is antagonistic to the anti-Black world. The system that has sought to destroy everything that is Black is shaken to the core when blackness re-emerges from the ash to affirm itself. The public intellectual has but one slogan and one mission to live by, “the world is anti-Black and must come to an end” (Wilderson 2014).

The consciousness that is demanded in the Black public intellectual is one that Biko foresaw, one who loves herself as she was made by the creator, one who loves her people and works towards the liberation of her people. Often when activist Black public intellectuals “choose a side” and declare their dedication to the Black struggle. Colonialism-coloniality is a system that thrives on patriarchy and the belittling of women, where the man is symbol of authority and the woman is the perpetual follower. Since the conquest of the global south, oppressed man have transferred this sort of oppressive masculinity into the Black community particularly on Black women and

termed it “African culture”. The Black female public intellectual therefore is constantly confronted by a system that always wants to determine what she does, wears, says or does not say. This causes anxiety and feelings of inadequacy in the Black female intellectual, a schizophrenic state where she has to almost divide herself in two or “pick a struggle”. Black female intellectuals are regularly discretised, silenced and diminished, told that they are only experiencing overt female emotions associated with their physiological misnomer and not intellectual meditations. The experience of living in an anti-Black world causes fear in the oppressed, resulting in committed activist intellectuals being few and rare. One is more likely to find Black public intellectuals who are Black but are western in ideology as well as those who are blatantly anti-black. Although one can understand this, as Black public intellectuals are faced with the same realities of anti-blackness that forces assimilation in order to be accepted in the neo-colonial global order. The existence of Black people in an anti-Black world has been characterised as ‘perpetual war’ by Maldonado-Torres (2016), where conditions that are common in war-torn environments are naturalised against Black people. Western modernity/coloniality has committed some of the most heinous crimes against people of colour the world over, ranging from the kidnapping and enslavement of Africans, colonisation, dispossession, exploitation and apartheid. In order to justify these crimes, people of colour had to be dehumanised and positioned as helpless savages in need of help.

A decolonial existence, thinking anew, a do-over or a new slate will erase all of these beliefs in the psyche of the coloniser and colonised in order to facilitate and new world order. Presently, there is no ‘kumbaya’ where some parts of the world like South Africa have gone through the TRC process and others atonement but there are still visible racial injustices that are the result of past or current anti-Black policies and beliefs. The cry herein is for the blatant refusal of Black public intellectuals to assimilate, to compromise, to fit in or shed themselves. The cry is for the complete acceptance of Black systems of knowledge, power and being if there is ever to be “kumbaya”. In a decolonial world system, western standards shall no longer be the measure of humanity, of being, of knowledge, and arts but will be just one of the voices that have an opportunity to speak at the table.

2.7 Towards a Fanonian Black Public Intellectual

In this section, I examine the conception of Fanon's native intellectual in relation to the Black public intellectual at hand. I sufficiently described the native intellectual above, beginning with his formation and nurture in a host of different societal organisations, such as the university, public discourse and the media. I argued above that native intellectuals are commonly recognised as natives who have been exposed to a vast degree of university education, in our case, the westernised university. Although undergoing university training does not always guarantee native intellectuals a seat at the table, especially if they challenge the status quo or speak "too black". Those intellectuals who are perceived as such in their communities solely based on the work they do are not usually accepted fully as intellectuals, their indigenous knowledge is disregarded and dismissed as unscientific. To begin the discussion however, it is impossible to understand the plight of the Black intellectual without understanding "the black/blackness" first. Therefore, this section that describes the Fanonian Black public intellectual we strive towards is rooted in Fanon's moment of "resignation":

"I made up my mind, since it was impossible to rid myself of an innate complex, to assert myself as a BLACK MAN. Since the 'Other' was reluctant to recognise me, there was only one answer: to make myself known."

Fanon ([1952] 2008: 95)

Fanon ([1961] 1990) posits that, the native intellectual should forego his training in the westernised university and find his people in order to awaken them to engage in the struggle for liberation. As asserted in Fanon ([1952] 2008) above, when the white world fails to accept the Black man and his attempts at assimilation; it is better that he asserts himself as he is, a Black man. Fanon ([1961] 1990) calls this process 'going native'. The conception of the native intellectual, I posit is not too far-fetched from that of a Black public intellectual in that both these entities are nurtured by some of the same societal structures; although they may do their work differently. Fanon ([1961] 1990) however, genders the native intellectual as male, speaks in a male voice and addresses largely male-centred issues. This can be seen in the native intellectual's initial desire to use his knowledge to gain the white man's power, not to help uplift his community. The Fanonian native intellectual is man who is at first concerned with the

shiny gates of the white man's culture but who later comes back to himself by "finding his people" after being confronted by the oppressive savagery of colonisation and its impact on his people. What I argue for here is a Fanonian Black public intellectual, who champions the values of negritude, one who is not limited by binary notions of gender, sexuality, religious beliefs and chauvinism. Fanon ([1961] 1990) must then be put to task and expanded to de-masculinise the native intellectual through inclusive conceptualisation of the concerns, activities and positionality of the public intellectual.

The Fanonian Black public intellectual therefore, should be concerned about and working towards making the world anew, creating a world of the 'you' in which fairness, justice and peace prevails. In his attempt to explain his positionality in the world, Fanon ([1952] 2008: 93) speaks directly to the being of the Black woman in neo-colonial South Africa today. He painstakingly posits that, having been gazed at, raped and pillaged "my body was returned to me spread-eagled, disjointed, redone, draped in mourning on this white winter's day". The Black woman is an animal, she is ugly, and she is bad as she is wicked. Look at her, she trembles with rage. Why is she so angry? The neo-colonial world ignores and silences the lived experiences of Black pain while fronting interest in said pain, more so of the Black woman for she is the sole reason her kind is dehumanised, she cannot possibly expect to possess any ontological density. The Black woman has no history, no story to tell and no significant contribution to humanity thus she is discarded from the intellectual realm. She is a 'thing' to be dissected for parts and thrown to the rubbish bin of the forgotten once exploited of all her ingenuity.

Everything about the Black woman is decided in her absence for she is "given no chance, I am over-determined without" (Fanon ([1952] 2008). The Black woman is reduced to a body, to be objectified by the white gaze. The white gaze gives and takes humanity from the Black woman at a whim, the giving was a favour and the taking away is perceived as just. No matter the extent of achievements, the Black woman cannot shake the stigma planted on her by the white gaze. The thousands of detailed anecdotes out of which her story is carved prevail, they are almost impossible to undo. The colonial world plays games of "shift-the-goalpost"; no matter how hard she tries, she can never score. Above all, her race is a creation of whiteness, made of millions

of details, stereotypes, anecdotes and unfounded stories. The Black woman cannot confirm or dispute any of these stories because she cannot act; she is acted upon. The Black woman must always be kept in her place, because she summons disgust from the neo-colonial world as she is equated with cannibalism, inferiority, lawlessness, moronic behaviour, stupidity, a thing. The Fanonian Black public intellectual is therefore one who has resigned from the system of white supremacy has taken the necessary steps to find her people in order to collectively awaken from the slumber of rainbow-nationalism. The Black public intellectual I am concerned with here is one who espouses Black consciousness, demonstrates a love of the self and her people and works with them to fight off neo-colonial-settler-apartheid-exclusionary apparatus.

The Fanonian Black public intellectual engaged here is not boxed in by colonial gender notions as Gordon (2000) argues that in addition to the colour line that has defined much of the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries, one must also consider the gender line, the class line, the sexual orientation line and religion line and that these lines are drawn between what is 'normal' and 'abnormal'. The Fanonian Black public intellectual fights for all of her people. She asserts the humanity of all her people, regardless of the gender, sexuality, religious and cultural beliefs. There are no gender lines in blackness, no class and status, certainly no sexuality or religion, there is just Blackness; the zone of non-being. In the neo-colonial imaginary, all blackness is the same and all of it is abnormal without exception. No matter the differentiation in preference, if you have encountered one Black you have encountered them all. This is not to dismiss the different experiences of Black people in different parts of the world but it is to emphasise that in the colonial imaginary, all blacks are the same, all labour and no brain, no matter the preference or status.

Fanon ([1952] 2008) notes that, the Black has been discarded and placed outside the realm of humanity, has been classified as non-human, maybe half-human when whiteness is generous. Since the abolishment of formal colonisation, the Black woman who births her race has not been accepted/included in the realm of human because "humans proper" know very well that the existence of the Black woman is as inhuman as it was seventy years ago. Being a thing without any emotions, the psychological and material effects of colonisation and oppression on Black people in general and

Black women in particular, are not accounted for because an animal cannot claim to "feel" anything. Therefore, instead of being understood as a people that is healing and dealing, black poeple are pathologised and positioned as "problems" (Du Bois 1994). Black people are not understood as people with problems after centuries of oppression, but they themselves are the problem (Gordon, 2000). The Fanonian Black public intellectual I conceptualise here is aware of the positionality of Blackness in the neo-colonial world and is ready to work with her people to gain freedom from all oppressive systems. The psychology of domination makes it that the Fanonian Black public intellectual is always aware of herself, always conscious of her body and its constant surveillance under the white gaze; particularly when she speaks from blackness.

Her clothes smell of *'Kaffir*', she has big grotesque buttocks, a huge nose and big lips. She is very loud, why won't she look, sound and behave like a 'civilised' woman? *Read* 'a white woman'. The Black knows that her body carries shame and incompleteness, a lack of humanity. But she is enraged, for centuries she has watched her people attempting to "denegrify", she has bleached her skin and straightened her hair. She 'speaks white' and 'thinks white', she has abandoned her culture to 'act right', she dresses, eats and lives white and yet she remains black? She is still devalued and degraded albeit all her degrees that prove that she too is an intellectual. She wants the surveillance to stop already; she does not seek recognition by the '*Other'* any longer for the '*Other'* cannot see her outside of her blackness. She wants to assert her blackness, she wants to tell her own story from her perspective and she will no longer allow the '*Other*' to dissect her body for laughs. She is the mouthpiece of her people, the hope of the slave and she speaks from her ancestors.

In her work, blackness as a state of being is a state of irrationality, because any being that is despised without reason will always wonder why. Blackness is an irrational being in an irrational world, a being that is expected to act rational while living the irrational. The world demands a double-consciousness that is superhuman to accomplish but somehow blackness lives in this state. Fanon ([1952] 2008) posits that blackness can never just '*be*' the colonial imaginary because each time it uses rationality to assert itself; it is met with extreme irrationality. This is found not only in face-to-face confrontations with whiteness but also on the greater scale of global

coloniality. Just when it attempts to assert itself, whiteness quickly counters with anecdotes of supposed “Black magic, primitive mentality, animalism and animal eroticism” blackness is constituted a “third-rate humanity” etched in history and proven in science. At this very point, the perceived rationality displayed by blackness is countered with “true rationality”. At this moment, blackness is given the option to continue to fight or to assimilate into whiteness and gain a little semblance of humanity, albeit that it can be taken away anytime. Blackness attempting reasoning with whiteness is not reasoning at all, because it is impossible to reason with the unreasonable.

Fanon ([1952] 2008) and Du Bois (1994) note the strangeness of existing as Black in this white-dominated world; Fanon ([1952] 2008: 90) observes that “ontology does not allow us to understand the being of the Black man, since it ignores the lived experiences”. Black experiences are silenced and minimised to nothing while the white world continues to enjoy the gains of the colonial conquest. The white world had to animalise black people in order to plunder, kill, rape and dispossess them without a conscience. It is not enough to just be Black in global colonial world, but the Black must also be Black in relation to whites. The Black man is in a constant, never ceasing race with one who has already defeated him in the game of thrones. As mentioned above, Black people have to formulate an existence day after day, in two mutually exclusive worlds. The world that affirms them and their culture and one that dismisses and degrades them because the Black is nothing but labour in the global scheme of things. Perhaps one can sympathise with the white world’s denial of Black pain, perhaps it is understandable that they dismiss and silence it.

How else will they conceal their savagery from themselves? Cesaire (1972) makes it a point that colonisation “decivilised” and “brutalised” the white man, it awoke him to instincts no human knew existed, to violence, hatred, moral degradation and savagery never known to man before. The west and its descendants are well aware that concealed under polished Christian values it is a breeder of Hitler-ism the third world over and that it is indefensible (Cesaire 1972). On its victims, colonisation robbed the third world of history in the making, a history that cannot be returned to. Colonisation destroyed functioning societies, destroyed religions; disrupted and disturbed economies that it replaced with its own, colonisation looted democratic societies and

condemned people of colour to doom. Colonisation used force and violence to spread it “decivilisation” to civilisations in the third world and it ‘thingified’ human beings for capital gains. This is the background upon which the Fanonian Black public intellectual I conceptualise here works. She is aware of the history of her body and her people, thus she fights hard to free once and for all. A Fanonian Black public intellectual I conceptualise here then is one who looks inward to find herself, to look in the mirror and meet herself. The Black intellectual is rightfully enraged; she will no longer sit back and let her people be toys for the white man, “in order to break the vicious circle, she explodes” Fanon ([1952] 2008: 102). She no longer fears rejection for she knows the world fears what she will do much more, the world perceives her an unpredictable. Fanon ([1952] 2008: 102) posits that the Black world is irrational and existence in this space is too; irrational. The Fanonian Black intellectual deals with a world, within and without that is irrational in the way it treats her people and she too must resort to irrationality. The world wonders how long it will take for scales to balance themselves, for the white man to get what is coming to him. She screams a resounding now, from blackness! She will no longer hide her Black face under a white mask; she reveals it, affirms it and is affirmed by it. The global colonial system silences her pain; she stands on the rooftops and shouts it aloud, she is BLACK. She does not want to be affirmed by the system; she has resigned from the system and has joined the struggle alongside her people. She wants to fight; she does not want to be seen for she is making herself KNOWN. Her work is that of the decolonial emancipation of her people, she will not rest until this is achieved. She writes, sings, dances, paints, sculpts, teaches, preaches, and acts. All in the name of freeing the oppressed.

2.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have provided a theoretical foundation of the Black public intellectual and the work she does based on Fanon’s Native Intellectual Consciousness. I began by examining this consciousness by looking at the results of colonial domination on a people and how said domination changes the consciousness of the native intellectual. I then looked closely at who inhibits the space of Black intellectualism and what it means to be in this space. I argued that the formation of the Black intellectual as we know him is problematic from the start, thereby creating disconnected, dishonest and disengaged intellectuals. With this said, I put forth a working definition for this study

that encompasses various ways of “knowing” and therefore intellectualising. I argued that multiple ways of being intellectuals and intellectualising deserve a space in discourse. I then examined the relationship of the Black public intellectual and his people, claiming that the Black public intellectual is viewed with suspicion by his own people. This is because of the manner in which he comes to be and the past encounters of his people with intellectuals. I posit that if the Black intellectual makes the effort to “find” his people he will begin the process of healing the estranged relationship so that he can join them in the struggle for emancipation. The Black intellectual is needed to awaken, help, guide and be with his people during the struggle. I then examined the “public” from Fanon’s point of view, asking fundamentally ‘who forms part of the public?’ what does it take for one to be accepted into the public and how does the suppressed Black experience this public. Lastly, I examined the nature of decolonial consciousness and what it means for the struggle for liberation. I then conceptualise the Fanonian Black public intellectual by reproaching Fanon ([1961] 1990) who exclusively genders the native intellectual male, thereby externalising the Black woman’s experience and contribution to discourse. Blackness is a positionality that has been explored in scholarship but very seldom from the point of view of the Black woman. I therefore ask, ‘how does it feel to be a problem’.

CHAPTER 3: LIVING IN BLACK: THE POSITIONALITY

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I begin first by locating blackness in the global conversation echoing the sentiments that come out of Black Twitter that 'Black people are catching hell, globally'. I will demonstrate the ways in which the world has shown its anti-Black face in history as well as currently. This anti-blackness is then juxtaposed with affirmations of Blackness that are coming out of the Black community through Black Twitter; after decades of attempting to assimilate to no avail. As a result, the community has finally decided to assert itself and speak from its pain. The point of departure here is that, the Black intellectual views the world from the position of Blackness, who comes to the world as such and responds to the world from this place of existence. Secondly, after contextualising the global condition of Blackness I then bring the conversation closer to home, South Africa; a country that was a beacon of hope for humanity in 1994 when black people were finally granted 'freedom'. I argue here that, the cost of this freedom was the silencing of Black pain, the silent concession that Blackness would start an unspoken process of denegrification and fit itself into the established white society in order to preserve the rainbow dream.

This is done through an assessment of the Black position in the country and what this means for the Black intellectual at hand. I continue to assert that, this freedom is in fact a façade rooted in Black blood and laced with Black tears. The Black is burdened with keeping the peace while the country denigrates more and more into anti-blackness. Thirdly, I examine the ways in which the silencing of Black pain through its exclusion from academic discourse is tantamount to jeopardising the unique history, memory and existence of a whole people. As is observed globally and in South Africa, when Blackness speaks from this pain, it is labelled counter-productive if not racist. In the last section, I explain the ways in which blackness itself is in jeopardy and at risk of losing itself should it be complicit in its own silencing. I posit that, the world calls upon us to reduce ourselves to nothing in order to make the dominant society comfortable. This exercise, if allowed will ensure the erasure of our history and the ignorance of our pain.

3.2 Being Black in the anti-Black world

In this section, I examine the peculiar feeling of being Black in the anti-Black world. I base all assumptions here on the logic of racialisation and how it affects the created 'Other' in negative ways. At this moment, the examination is more general and focuses on global anti-blackness and how it is imitated in local spaces. My point of departure is therefore, to examine what it means to be black. Fanon ([1952] 2008: 90) teaches us that, "being Black in the anti-Black world is a positionality of non-existence. He further asserts that, the world does not allow us to understand the being of the black, relegating him to an empty space, lacking in ontological resistance". Fanon ([1952] 2008: 90) shows us that, "because the lived experience of the Black is ignored and excluded in discourse, the Black is thereby denigrated to an empty being; he has no history, no soul, no discernible contributions to humanity, and no real use but as a mule. The Black is the 'Other' that is completely removed from humanity". I use the word 'removed' deliberately to demonstrate that, the absence of the Black from humanity is not as a result of divine intervention but the depraved acts of a depraved civilisation.

Wekker (2016: 40) supports this notion by positing that, "by 'fixing the Other', Whiteness fixes itself as 'the other of the other'". That is to say, white purity is deliberately 'fixed' as the result of Black debauchery and white supremacy is empty without Black inferiority. We can therefore see that, being Black is a positionality that is created specifically to sanitise Whiteness. The Black becomes racialised as the 'Other' to cement white purity, innocence, superiority, intelligence, and 'godliness' (Wekker 2016). Biko (2004: 31) teaches us that, "the project of white domination in all its various faces; is undertaken to prepare the Black for the position of subservience, servitude and timidity in the face of oppression". This is achieved through the distortion of Black history, the emptying of Black people's memory, and the recreation of the Black woven out in meticulous detail, thousands of anecdotes, and stories (Fanon 1952: 91), (Biko 2004: 31). Being Black as we know it therefore, is the act of experiencing oneself from this positionality. It is the daily battle that Wekker (2016: 41) describes as "the struggle to throw off images of ourselves that whites have made of us in order for us to see ourselves as we are and not through the eyes of the 'Other'".

We know from experience that being Black in the world is particularly a peculiar experience. We live in a world that will not leave us to figure out what it means to live in this skin on our own. It is even more discouraging being Black in anti-Black Africa, one that thrives on the suffering and exploitation of Black people. Anti-blackness does not only exist in the west, it lives quite comfortably on the continent whose majority is Black and in most times is internalised by Blacks themselves. The anti-Black world renders Black people invisible only to appear as property, to be used for the financial and material benefit of others. This kind of pathological visibility of course grounds itself on the position of Africa as the property of Europe and America who rape and pillage the continent consistently for centuries passed. Wekker (2016: 41) shows us that it is important for us to study, examine and write blackness ourselves, for ourselves. This is because we have been left to be studied by the 'other' for centuries and they used us to create idealised images of themselves, defining the oppressed/enslaved/occupied/dominated as violent, alien, backward, savage, and primitive while permanently enshrining themselves as 'god-like'. It is therefore important that, Blackness speak for itself and permanently record its pain in discourse. This activity not only breaks the myth of white innocence but also helps in the struggle to un-see ourselves in the images of us created by the 'Other'.

Additionally, we begin to record ourselves in history as a people with problems caused by a historical encounter with a savage civilisation and not 'the problem' itself (Du Bois 1994). Blackness speaking for itself, presents a significant domino effect that begins to shift the ways the world dehumanises us. For example, the death of hundreds of millions of Black people in the hands of white oppressors is not considered as 'genocide'. The kidnapping of millions of Africans for enslavement is called 'slave trade' in order to cast blame on the victims. The settlement of South Africa by colonisers is called a 'rainbow nation' in order to sanitise the violence of continued settlement.

I posit here that, all of these injustices are direct results of the positioning of Black people as beings with no soul, no history and no ontological density; leading to the validation of all acts of violence against them. When we begin to speak from our pain, to examine and write on the Black condition; we begin the process of re-humanising ourselves so that we can demand justice for all crimes against us and not just offer

‘forgiveness’ to those who continue to oppress us. Global Black Twitter engages the question of anti-blackness almost daily, we are confronted with images of dead bodies that look like us, criminalised and dehumanised bodies that look like us, we are struck by images of extreme poverty, filth and diseases impacting exclusively people who look like us, we see perpetual war, violence and murder impacting people who look like us. Black Twitter collectively makes sense of this world through conversation, and protest. The #BlackLivesMatter movement is prime example of this, it started in the USA after the deaths of Mike Brown and Travon Martin; the movement has spread throughout the Black world. It is now used to cement our humanity against all manner of injustice. Black Twitter has been the vanguard defence of Black dignity. It was Black Twitter that sprung to defence when the American president called Black nations #ShitHole countries. Although it was clear that, the platform was not attempting to change Trump’s mind, Black people came together and shared the successes they have achieved against all odds as counter-spin for the Black world.

Black women on Black Twitter came together to mourn the suspicious death of #SandraBland in police custody in the USA. They formulated a counter-narrative of her life after the police suggested that she was ‘cheeky’ and deserving of death. From this point of view, it is clear that the Black condition is worth studying, not only globally but also locally. Anti-blackness exists within and without the Black community, particularly in South Africa. It is therefore important to examine and record its manifestations as a cautionary tale to those who seek emancipation for the race. This study places Blackness at the centre of discourse, an activity one does not typically witness in the westernised university that practices epistemic racism. In this study, Blackness will unmask its pain ad speak from its positionality; freed from the shackles of the rainbow nation of 1994.

3.3 Black in post-94 South Africa

This section examines the Black condition in post-94 South Africa. I use the term ‘post-94’ as opposed to the popular ‘post-apartheid’ in protest of the notion that, apartheid was an event with a specific beginning and end. This first part will provide a brief background of the years of formalised apartheid while the last will link this systemic ideology to contemporary South Africa. South African History Organisation-SAHO

(2018) defines apartheid as, an ideology based on the Afrikaans word meaning ‘apartness’ that was embraced by the National Party. The ideology is said to have been formally introduced as policy in 1948. SAHO (2018) claims that, at inceptions and on paper, apartheid was meant to oversee ‘equal but separate development’ of the races but it became something else once implementation began. It is argued that, the policy came at the back of segregation, which had been the country’s modus operandi from the arrival of European settlers and throughout colonisation. The difference with apartheid, SAHO (2018) claims was that, Dutch descendant settlers formalised oppression and actually created laws that made disobeying oppression a punishable act. Apartheid designated South Africa a white country, relegated all ‘non-whites’ to tiny portions of the country called ‘homelands’. It created curfews for Black people who worked in the towns (SAHO 2018). Many were jailed, exiled and killed for disobeying apartheid laws and resisting the system. Leaders of the Black resistance against apartheid were killed and jailed, causing anti-apartheid movements to intensify. The system is said to have continued until the early 1990s when political parties were unbanned, most Black leaders released from prison and negotiations for freedom began.

As a result, 1994 is an important year because that is when the first democratic elections were held, resulting in the country’s first Black president; Nelson Mandela. This year also poses a problem because, in addition to giving amnesty to apartheid killers, it sanitised the white community of all blame for the maintenance of apartheid, it silenced Black pain, and it granted unilateral forgiveness to white criminals without any semblance of justice. This year and all the euphoria it ushered in, also made it almost taboo to talk about white wealth drenched in Black blood, land, restoration of the black, reparations, atonement of the white community, continued inequality or justice. Everyone seemed to carry on as if nothing happened.

It therefore makes it imperative to study the Black condition after 1994, especially at this moment of reckoning. Being Black in South Africa post-94 although it is a precise experience, is not much different to being Black in the global white supremacist system. It is a damned experience at the bottom of the human pyramid if you will. I would be amiss to leave out Biko on any discussion of blackness in South Africa. Although Biko (2004) made observations and submissions on black people and

Blackness back in the 70s, much of his arguments apply today in much the same way they did then. The struggle for Black liberation should be seen as having been suspended shortly but never stopped. At the moment, the fight is not for the Black to vote or for the abolishment of the 'dompass', the struggle now is for the Black to 'live'. Biko (2004) noted, almost prophesied that, those fighting for Black freedom, in seeking for a quick remedy have 'taken a brief look at what is, and have diagnosed the problem incorrectly'. He continues and argues that, 'they have almost completely forgotten about the side effects and have not even considered the root cause'. Biko makes these submissions in an effort to discourage the quick diagnosis of the 'Black problem' through which quick but shallow solutions are arrived at leading to a failure to solve anything. The fact that Black people in South Africa have problems should not shock anyone, for who would not have problems after centuries of exposure to savagery, cruelty, violent occupation and oppression. Biko (2004) calls on us not to be shallow when analysing blacks in South Africa after the cruelty they have endured, but to use depth and critical skills in this process. He also places a major task on blacks themselves, to look inward at the self and the Black community, to seek and find healing in order to rebuild.

The country claims to be 'free' since the momentous election of 1994, that blacks are now emancipated from oppression and exploitation. Yet when reading Biko (2004), one is immediately struck by the familiarity of his observations to the present day and how things have changed but remained the same. He suggests that, blacks under oppression had no reason to trust political leadership because all they knew from them was the over securitisation of Black neighbourhoods, the exploitation and marginalisation of Black labour and general inhumanity.

Biko (2004) puts his finger on the condition of the Black man when he points that, 'he has lost his manhood, reduced to an obliging shell. Inside, his anger grows at accumulating insult'. He continues to say that, he is a shell, a shadow of a man, completely defeated, drowning in his own misery, a slave, an ox bearing the yoke of oppression with sheepish timidity. In this description, Biko (2004) sought to describe the condition of the oppressed Black man under apartheid not the emancipated Black of two decades later. It is therefore disconcerting to read this description and observe that, this is the 'emancipated' Black of present day South Africa. The systematic and

systemic oppression and exploitation of blacks did not cease in 1994, it took on a new face and continued unchallenged. Blacks in South Africa are caught in a tangent, trying their level best to keep up the myth of a non-existent 'rainbow nation' alive at the expense of their own bodies. Since 1994, Black experience of trauma and pain resulting from colonial-apartheid has been strategically silenced through the catchphrase that forced black people to keep quiet in order to not offend the white community. It was all good and well at first because, at the dawn of democracy, the white society suddenly had more anxiety about equality than blacks in three centuries of oppression and so the phrase gave assurance of their still elevated status in society. Once Black anxiety was dismissed and minimised for the elevation of white fears, the existing human hierarchy was preserved unchallenged so black people could not speak on the cruelty of the current democratic dispensation without being labelled racist or as anti-rainbow nation and therefore anti-reconciliation. At any mention of redress, return of stolen land or justice this phrased is thrown into the conversation to silence blacks into timidity accompanied by the all familiar threat of 'white flight' from the country should their privilege be threatened.

The Black population has sacrificed for over two decades, hoping that the white community would perhaps arrive at a place where it would be ready to atone for past savagery committed in its name and for its benefit, atone for its complicity in the savagery and actually reconcile. South Africa, through reconciliation efforts, quickly shifted focus from the trauma of Black people who had been oppressed for centuries to alleviating white people's fears about whether or not they were welcome here. As soon as it seemed like democracy was afoot, the white community displayed anxiety regarding their ill-gotten wealth, privileges and socio-economic status in society. Due to the ontological density of the white, Black pain had to be silenced so that white anxiety could be lessened.

The country since then has been invested in the maintenance of white feelings over justice, restoration, reparation, or healing. Vice (2010) takes this discussion of white feelings into consideration, wondering as an individual and community 'how whites can live in this strange place'. She provides a number of solutions, including the suggestion that whites should feel some level of guilt, shame and regret for participating and propping up systems of oppression. These suggestions are given

after the realisation that, they cannot; not be white and so they cannot; not be privileged, essentially. Vice (2010) also notes that, whites can maybe support initiatives for social cohesion; donate to causes and help in restorative initiatives. By doing this, whites may start to feel a sense of belonging in the country and ease for benefitting from the oppression of others. Like the reconciliatory initiatives of 94, Vice (2010) is focussed on white feelings; going as far as claiming that their privilege is a result of luck and that they cannot do much to change it except donating and volunteering. This is problematic in that the white community deliberately and knowingly propped up a violent, oppressive regime through votes and membership fees specifically for the privilege they have today. This was not luck and claiming minimises the death, dispossession and dehumanisation of millions of Africans. Vice (2010) righty asserts that, whites should experience themselves as a problem, see the whole entire world.

What she may have suggested rather is that a shift happen and focus move from white fears to Black trauma, pain and anxiety at last. Restoration has not happened in South Africa; instead Black poverty has grown at rates as high as whites are amassing wealth and prosperity (SAHRC 2018). Through all this, whites have managed to publicly position themselves as victims of oppression who should be coddled under Black governance. Dolby in (2010) published a study, she conducted using white high school students as participants at the dawn of democracy, this study not only reflects present day South Africa but a bleak future for the ‘rainbow nation’.

In her study, Dolby (2010) finds that, white youths are fearful and resentful that whiteness is no longer in political control of the country and that the “other” has ceased centre stage, a space that was preserved for them. These youths, sharing a school with Black students for the first time, expressed fear over threats of ‘Black violence’ and ‘Black economic prosperity’ all of which they should not be exposed to as they were not involved in the sins of the past. Dolby (2010) notes that, the only safety net for the youths is to then, position blacks as a whole group, as ‘morally inferior beings’ who are only interested in avenging the past, that of course they do not feel they have anything to do with. Interestingly, white violence is not critiqued or even mentioned by these students because to them ‘white presents as innocent’. They rely heavily on quoting black-on-white violence, black-on-Black violence but never white-on-Black or

even white-on-white violence because that would lift the veil of innocence off Whiteness. The students, despise being constantly exposed to happy, content and ‘well-off’ black people because this not the image of blackness they are used to. This case study represents perfectly the constant surveillance of Blackness in present day South Africa, the need for blackness to know its place and not be allowed to get too comfortable or get out of hand. The only way, essentially, for the rainbow nation to be upheld is for blackness to shrink to nothing around Whiteness, to minimise itself to zero in order for Whiteness to keep its place in the centre. Otherwise, an upset is established and that cannot be heard. South African leaders in the ANC, throughout its years, as a protest and liberation movement have envisioned and embraced what they called a ‘non-racial’ society, this concept was seemingly accepted without interrogation and one wonders why it even became part of the discourse. Supposedly, this would foster an identity based on the notion of common South African-ness removed from ethnic and racial identity.

Ramsay (2006) argues that, due to the lack of support from the Indian and Coloured minorities as well as Zulu nationalists, this ideal started to lose momentum. This instance then led to establishment of a new ideal, one that was said to accommodate the country’s diverse ‘even antagonistic identities under one rubric', the Rainbow Nation (Ramsay, 2006). Understanding the formation of and maintenance of both ideals lead to questions regarding the targeted audience and perceived outcome thereof. The concept of the rainbow nation, at its inception and presently, has assumed the position of keeping the racial status quo as is, not questioning it or dismantling it. Whiteness, as the global racial norm in terms of standards of beauty, cleanliness, purity, innocence, acceptability and humanness, non-racialism does not challenge this order at all. Instead, it calls for it to be accepted as is, essentially, for Blackness to collapse itself in assimilation to Whiteness.

I do not make this argument lightly but, I consider the effects of centuries of domination not only materially and economically but also psychologically. It appears to me that, those that need to raise the calls of non-racialism, or more to the point, race suicide, are those in the dominating society not the dominated. When the dominated suggest non-racialism to the dominating, it reveals that, they are not willing to challenge the dominant racial order but are willing to dim their Blackness to fit into an acceptable

standard. Perhaps this was the beginning of the death of ‘Black consciousness’, which would have been the antagonistic to non-racialism. Anybody who claims colour-blindness, silences centuries of experiences of the Black body and forces the Black body to silence its own pain. So because you don’t see me or my pain, I should also be blind to it so we can ‘move on’. Msimang, as seen in *Figure 3.1-3.6* below, expresses that, not only has the notion of the rainbow nation or ‘colour-blindness’ failed dismally at uniting the Black and White populations of South Africa, it is also a very dangerous concept. Msimang adds that, this concept, in South Africa is used by those in the dominant society to cleanse themselves if their racist, exploitative and exclusionary history while enforcing the same ills on others and preserving all the privileges they accumulated through these ills. Lastly, Msimang emphasised that, Black people ‘cannot afford to ignore race’, they have been collectively oppressed as a people because of their race; the call for them to ignore race is therefore yet another layer in their oppression.

Figure 3.1

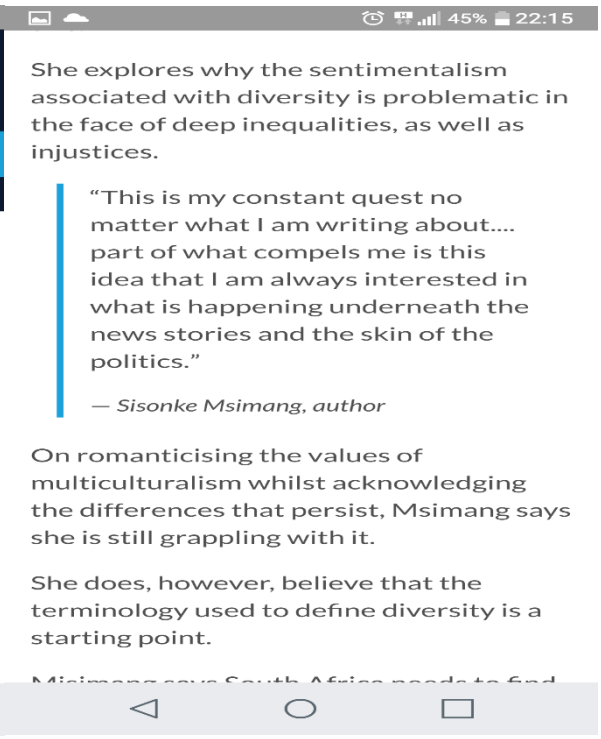


Figure 3.2

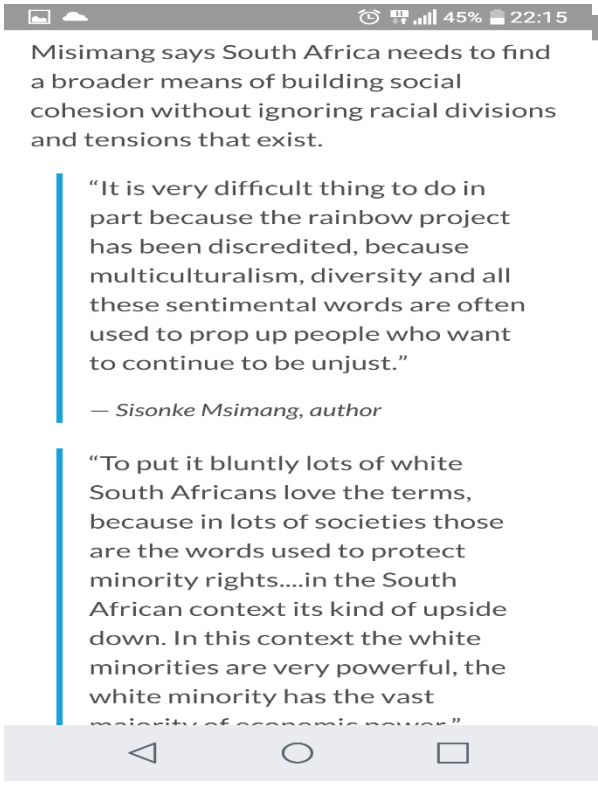


Figure 3.3

Figure 3.4

Figure 3.5

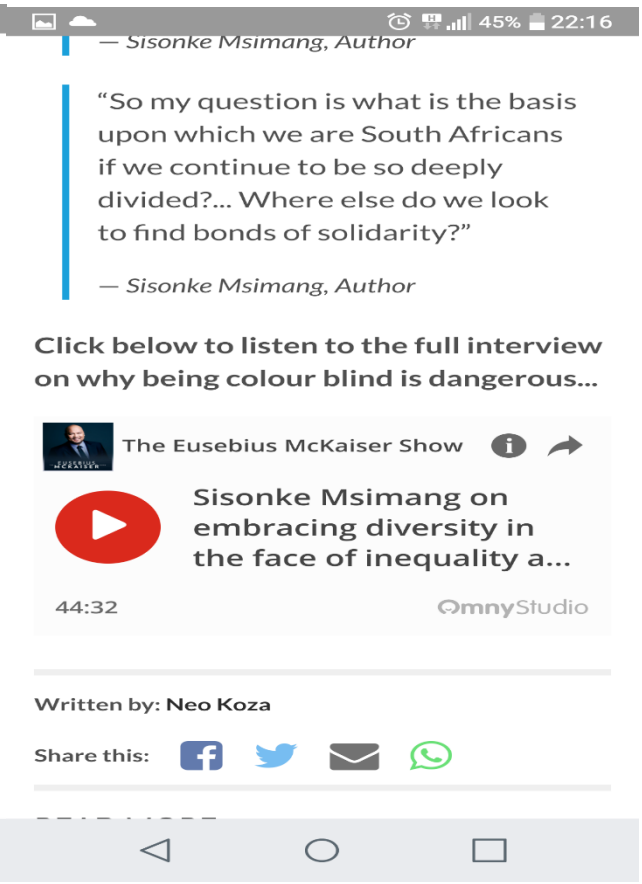


Figure 3.6

It is noteworthy that, there have been many attempts at cleansing South Africa of its savagely racist past, with the likes of Gumede (2010) advocating for the creation of a 'new South African identity'. He at least acknowledges the country's violent history of colonial-apartheid that divided citizens along 'political, cultural, linguistic and ethnic lines'. He further asserts that, these divisions are sometimes helped along by the citizens who 'cleave to the divisions of the past' making the establishment of a common identity much harder. Rightly, Gumede (2010) posits that, what will be our national identity should not be based on a singular culture, language or ethnicity nor should it rely on Western models on nationhood. He suggests that, this identity should be a 'layered, plural and inclusive one' that is based on our 'interconnected differences'.

Hence, it can be postulated that, Gumede is a product of the so called 'Black middle class' and speaks from that positionality. He goes further downhill from here, arguing that, this identity must be carved out of our history of emerging out of the 'ashes of a civil war and peacefully constructing a democratic dispensation'. One wonders why Gumede shies away from labelling colonial-apartheid a race crime against Black and brown people. Why he seems to skirt around the real cause of the divide in South African society? The fact that foreigners came to our shores, oppressed African natives, sowing divisions and instilling mistrust in their intensions forever? For some reason he believes that this shared South African-ness is a political construct that should be fostered by political leaders and that it should emphasise the present and future, 'rather than remaining trapped in the bitterness of the past'.

Although Gumede (2010) recognises the continued legacy of colonial-apartheid, he seems to be from the 'get over it' school of thought. He does not pay enough attention, if at all, to justice, redress or the healing that transpires through the return of stolen ancestral land. He just wants blacks to 'move on and focus on the future'. A recurring theme in his thoughts is on how injustices are left in the past, as if he does not see how the past is present in Soweto, Mdantsane or Khayelitsha. Blackness in South Africa post-94 is rooted in daily sacrifice, a daily compromise of the potential of the self and the community. With the dawn of democracy, non-racialism and rainbow nationalism have come out right as disregard of everything black. These buzz words did Blackness a true disservice because they entrenched on the dominant society that,

anybody who was affirmed by and affirmed their Blackness was ‘anti’ all the good hopes held for the country. Black people continued to compromise on the expression of their pain. They swallow it up in white corporate spaces that do not want to hear it. They participate in the disregard and destruction of their languages, a compromise based on the understanding that English and Afrikaans were the dominant languages and they had to embrace these in order to foster this ‘South African common identity’. They keep quiet today when big law firms, hotel groups and managers make it ‘illegal’ to speak any language other than English and Afrikaans. They are still trying to uphold the myth of ‘togetherness’ so they cannot complain about this lest they be labelled ‘racist’ for being too black. Blacks compromise themselves daily when corporate SA and education facilities exotify and ‘Other’ Black hair.

When the students at Pretoria Girls High are told to bare the risk of cancer and straighten their hair because the way they naturally look is not acceptable, or clean, or formal, or neat. They compromise and assimilate to white standards of clean, and neat and acceptable. This is what it means to be African in South Africa today, ‘we’ll take you in any way, but how you are’. The hyper-humanisation of Whiteness and dehumanisation of Blackness is not yet absent from discourse, a white girl from Pietermaritzburg High School calling her classmates ‘Kaffirs’ is understood as undergoing a stressful exam period. While her Black classmates ‘feeling’ humiliated and hurt by this are told that they are overreacting, being irrational and dramatic. In the above scenarios, Blackness must shrink itself in order to make whiteness comfortable.

For me, to say the Black in South Africa in the past three centuries has been ‘living’ in the true sense of the word, would be a lie. For to live is to have the opportunity to reach full potential for oneself without systematic hindrance, to build a ‘home’ in a particular place with particular people. Based on the above simplistic definition one can immediately see that the Black has not been living for centuries, but has been surviving. I want to start by relaying the story of a shift in the most basic African custom, that of greeting. AmaXhosa, when asked ‘unjani’ (how are you?) would generally answer, ‘ndiyaphila’ (I am living/I am alive/I live= I am ok). I have noted a perhaps subconscious shift in this exchange where people now readily answer ‘ndiyazama’ meaning, ‘I am trying, I am surviving’. Perhaps those who study African linguistics can

study this phenomenon better than I can, as my focus here is to examine the constant 'trying/surviving' state of Blackness that is a direct result of the colonial experience. Maldonado-Torres (2016) provides a broad discussion on the metaphysical catastrophe that 'naturalises war' on Black bodies through the stratification of humanity. This stratification made legitimate the genocide of Native Americans, the kidnapping and enslavement of Africans and the continued colonisation of the global South. Through this understanding, one can deduce that the Black lives in a perpetual war that requires a daily fight just to make it to the next day. This perpetual war makes conditions like rape, torture, imprisonment, and premature death; that are observable in war-torn environments the norm, or the natural way of things for black people.

Maldonado-Torres (2016) calls this an existence in the 'zone of non-being' where the Black cannot possess anything of value, 'neither land or much time to live, nor goods and resources, and not even the possibility of generate self-esteem'. The only thing the Black is expected to do is to kill Blackness in oneself in order to be partially accepted by the living. This further extends the perpetual state of war in which the Black lives, because the Black is at war 'within and without'. Biko (2004) also made this diagnosis when he claimed that, the Black has been left 'a shell of a man' by modernity/coloniality/apartheid, he needs to be brought back to himself and to have life injected back into his shell in order to 'live'. The Black in South Africa, as she is a creation of Whiteness lives only through the permission and affirmation of Whiteness and cannot exist without the white gaze unless she is in protest against said gaze.

Plenty of scholars have argued that, Blackness is in an existential struggle because Blackness continues being the non-living object in the colonial imaginary, cheap unprotected labour in the country. Sithole (2016) identified the 'zero-ontological plenitude' of Blackness as the cause of its dehumanisation. A being without any ontology, history, moral capacity, but as a 'god' that cannot be seen as a human being. In order for Blackness to get on the path of 'human-becoming', it must gravitate towards Whiteness, towards true humanity to cleanse itself of 'criminality, cannibalism, primitivity and dishonour'; Blackness must positively flee from itself. Blackness in state, conditions, laws, rules, morals, values, with histories and knowledge that are not of its own making and for that reason Blackness cannot claim to 'live'. For Blackness does

not make pronunciations about Black life, Black life is decided without the black. Therefore, Blackness is merely 'trying/surviving' in a world it did not create.

3.4 Blackness in Jeopardy

I have demonstrated previously that, South Africa classifies its population in four that is; Black (African), white, coloured and Indian after the initial blanket 'white and non-white'. This classification historically determined where one lived, schooled, and worked, economic and social prospects, marriage, and where one would eventually be buried. For centuries, the oppressed populations carried separate struggles for freedom until leaders like Steve Biko began to suggest unity in order to defeat the oppressor. Once this unity began to foster, all 'non-white' peoples started being regarded as 'black'. In this section, I focus on the manner in which the Black struggle which is unique in nature even among other peoples of colour; is in jeopardy. Although there are definite positives and benefits to the inclusivity of blackness, there are also some major downfalls. One of the downfalls is the silencing of Black pain which has been the central theme of South African since the dawn of democracy.

Because of the intentional inclusiveness of the race and all the benefits it has yielded, it has become increasingly difficult for Black people to discuss anti-blackness that is directed solely at them from whites and also from coloured and Indians. Each time this conversation starts up, the two communities of colour immediately retreat to concealing the anti-blackness under the veil of also being Black and having also been oppressed. This kind of rhetoric has not been productive for the healing of Black people in particular as they are simply required to remain silent about their pain unless it is directed solely at the white community or includes other oppressed groups. There is a particularity to Black oppression in South Africa and it needs a specific kind of conversation and healing. I have discussed these movements in detail in the next chapter. In this section, I want to posit that, because Blackness is the antithesis of humanity Black pain is easily ignored as the anti-Black world has been so desensitised to our pain and suffering.

As the expression of Black pain begins to centre itself in discourse, question of what Blackness means fundamentally are also coming up. The classical nature of the neo-

colonial world is the moving of the goal-posts on everything; including the identity of the 'Other'. With this said, Black Twitter has been fielding off the question of Blackness, what Blackness is, who qualifies to speak on its behalf, and why they should speak. The racist, sexist neo-colonial world, as a silencing tool, equates the voicing out of Black pain as the 'performance of oppression' or 'victimhood'. The chosen intellectuals are part of these Black Twitter activists who, despite being for doing so, speak, think and fight for blackness. They advocate for Black people to carve out safe spaces to define for itself what Blackness means. Dana is known to have been confronted on a radio show about the subject, prompting her to famously assert that 'Blackness in whatever Black decide it is (*Figure 3.7*). It is these views that garnered negative responses from racists, going as far as calling her a 'professional black' in demeaning ways.

Figure 3.7

It is noteworthy that, the silencing of Black pain has been most prominent in South Africa where the burden of preserving the rainbow nation as conceptualised by Nelson Mandela has been laid squarely in the shoulders of Black people. This began, of course with the formation of the TRC which exonerated practically the entire white community for actively and passively propping the apartheid regime up, leading to all the atrocities experienced by Black people. Even in 2018, the burden to create, preserve and maintain peace is expected seemingly only of Black people such that, if discussion like inequality, discrimination, racism, Black poverty are ever brought up; Black people are told they are being racist and inciting hate and division.

The question of Blackness means different things to different people, some are more fundamental in view than others. While Dana asserts that, we have not had the space to define Blackness for ourselves, Mazwai *(Figure 3.8)* reproaches the country's celebrities for 'chasing Whiteness' and claims that, we need more of those who will 'teach us to celebrate' our Blackness. For Mazwai, as seen in Figure 3.9 below, Blackness lies in the rejection of everything she views as 'assimilation' to Whiteness. She gets in trouble with Black women for claiming that the use of 'fake hair or weaves' is a manifestation of self-hate and aspiring to be white. For Mazwai, there is a need for Blackness to assert itself in its most 'real' form. What 'real' Blackness means is a personal project, Mazwai tends to subscribe her version to everyone; leading to animosity and resentment.

Figure 3.8

Figure 3.9

To me, Mazwai is one of the biggest critiques of Mandela's legacy and contribution to the Black struggle. She sees herself as an outsider to his 'rainbow nation' and she asserts that, his former wife, Mama Winnie Mandela was much more radical than he. This line of thought is very difficult for a country that literally built on the legacy of Mandela and so Mazwai gets a lot of criticism from Black Twitter for voicing these opinions. Mazwai holds the opinion that *(Figure 3.10)*, Mandela was a Black white supremacist whose only job as president was to preserve white privilege and entrench white people as the true beneficiaries of 1994. Mazwai has been called racist and divisive plenty of times, by both Black and white rainbow-nationalists for these views.

Figure 3.10

The silencing strategy of projecting racism onto Black Twitter is used actively by right-wingers who do not want to discuss or deal with the country's inequality, the land question or the day to day micro aggressions faced by Black people in social or economic spaces. Instead of dealing with the pain of Blackness, the anti-Black society then calls on Blackness to lose itself as a way to advance itself. The process of denegrification is put on the table as the only option to progress and gain success although it has been proven over centuries that there is no place for Blackness in Whiteness. Proving Fanon's ([1952] 2008) assertion that, the coloniser has made himself the standard of humanity and anyone who seeks relief from the depravity inflected by whiteness on indigenous communities would have to assimilate into that depravity.

With all the cruelty and inhumanity displayed to the world, the white world has managed to position blackness as the scary, intimidating and violent other. In this way the suggestion then becomes that Black people must reduce themselves to almost nothing in order to not intimidate the timid, innocent white population. As posited by Du Bois, Black people are positioned as problems. I assert that this is not a coincidence or lack of understanding, but a projection of the white man's depravity on the Black object so that he can feel better about his own deeds. If the Black is intimidating, violent and scary then all of the cruelty the Black man faces is justified, valid and necessary. This has been the narrative in South African pre and post 94. The black people who retaliated against white domination were labelled terrorists the world over, the black people who fight for equality, service delivery or land are today

labelled as violent, ungrateful, entitled natives who should be silent about their discontentment.

All these suggestions leave Blackness in a place of limbo, where Black people are not allowed space to express, grieve, sit with or discuss their pain. The act of dealing with their pain is instead turned into an act of war against the dominant society that still benefits from Black people's oppression today. Because Black people have not and cannot heal from their violent past, they simply retreat into violence because of the loss of self and identity. This further proves to the world that they are no good, as diagnosed by Fanon ([1952] 2008) that, the coloniser creates conditions of violence for the native so he can point at the violence that he has created as the inherent condition of the native. If South Africa proves anything, it is that, there is no such thing as denegrification or assimilation. Both processes render a disservice to the many Black people who have died fighting for freedom because a kaffir will always be a 'kaffir', no matter what he does. After centuries upon decades of silence, Black people the world over have started to speak up and Black Twitter is one of mediums though which Black pain is expressed.

South African Black Twitter is arguably the most active on the continent, perhaps maybe second to USA Black Twitter in activity. The platform has been most outspoken about the state of Blackness in the country, calling themselves 'Mandela's restless children' in order to sarcastically mention the anti-Black nature of the country. Black Twitter can be accredited for the online protest that led to the first conceptualisation of the Hate Speech Bill, something that has never been done before. This came after a spate of racist outbursts on social media and society in general. Black Twitter was also responsible for getting ENCA to change its policies about what is considered 'neat or clean', this is after Nontobeko Sibisi was prevented from wearing a doek/head-wrap on Heritage day. The tag #RespekTheDoek lit a fire under the executives at the station until the policy was changed. Black Twitter argued that this was an anti-Black stance at ENCA and also an insinuation that the Black women who wear doeks everyday are 'unclean, untidy and unprofessional'.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a launching pad for discussing the fact of Blackness in the contemporary anti-Black world. Historically, thinkers like Fanon, Biko and Malcolm X have thought through anti-blackness on our behalf in order to give us a blueprint of the ways in which the world will continue to abuse us. The task of these thinkers was to relay this message in terms of history and the contemporary for future generations. My attempt here was to set the scene that resulted in the formation of new Black struggle platforms such as Black Twitter. The world as we experience it did not just suddenly become anti-black; this is also not a coincidence but is rooted in capital and how the world has profited from our oppression. It is therefore important to articulate our struggles, even when we have no audience. This chapter has mapped out the experiences of being in the anti-Black world, first on the global scale. I examined this peculiar experience and rooted it in historical context. I then narrowed the discussion down to the local, how it is to be Black in South Africa after 1994. It was important to be specific in this section because 1994 was meant to usher in a new dawn for Black people. I therefore needed to see if this was the case. The last part of the chapter is a war-cry, expressing that, in the face of neo-coloniality, racism, oppression and exclusion; Blackness is still in jeopardy. Unless and until the world is made anew, those who suffer the brunt of its inequality will continue to struggle for justice. The oppressed will not stop speaking from their pain, going as far as carving sites of struggle where they pledge solidarity to one another in unlikely places, like Black Twitter.

CHAPTER 4: BLACK SOLIDARITY AND BLACK TWITTER

4.1 Introduction

Firstly, this chapter sets out to describe a phenomenon called Black Twitter. This is an attempt to shed light on what Black Twitter is, what it does and how it works, the objective being to set a communication scene upon which Blackness is seen to perform itself. This first part of the chapter is more descriptive and general in nature; I attempt here to draw a picture of this unusual, organically formulated platform for the reader before delving into more specific data. Secondly, I situate the Black as a speaking being on the Black Twitter; a safe-space upon which issues that affect the Black community take centre stage. I explain here that, twitter activism has added to forms of Black protest in a world that kills, harms or destroys Black bodies that engage in physical protest. Black Twitter allows the community to speak up, think through, and work out some of inter-generational traumas that are suffered by Black people, together.

Thirdly, Black Twitter teaches us that, technological inventions are shaped, changed and customised based on the needs of a particular society as a given time. I posit here that the inventors of Twitter could not have been bothered about Black oppression when they conceptualised the application, and yet it has become a site of protest because that is what is needed at the moment. I then proceed to argue that, Black Twitter protest/activism is a manifestation of Black solidarity; a concept that I advance as a necessity for the oppressed. I argue here that, those whose stories are ignored, misrepresented and miscommunicated by mainstream media find a space on the platform to speak for themselves; with others who experience the world in similar ways.

Fourthly, I examine the ways in which Black Twitter is viewed when it comes to racism. I posit that, contrary to the discomfort of the dominant society, the platform is not in any way racist but arises out of racial need. Black Twitter is not a choice, it is a necessity. I then critique the platform for dealing with racism in reactionary ways and treating it as an event that comes and goes. I argue that, this leads to a ‘Black rant’ that fuels emotive reactions that lack strategy and ideology. Lastly, I call for the

reconfiguration of the Black communication practice. This will be done once Black Twitter takes time to understand racism in its truest form, understand anti-blackness and all its manifestations and coming with decisive strategies to combat this scourge that the Black community.

4.2 Black Twitter

In this section, I explore the social phenomenon that is 'Black Twitter', I provide a background on what exactly this platform is and how it comes to be. I then contextualise Black Twitter in the study at hand as the site for Black communicative activity. I also ground the work here in the general use of other social media like Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn and Instagram in the country and the qualities that set Twitter as a whole and Black Twitter in particular, apart. South Africans have embraced technologies and the accompanying social media websites fairly well, many citizens use these sites to keep in touch with old friends, find new ones and keep in constant communication with family members who live far due to work and school. A survey conducted in 2016 uncovered that 40% of South African social media users are on Facebook, while 25% use YouTube, 12% are on LinkedIn, 15% on Instagram and only 8% are Twitter users. Clearly, Twitter is not the most widely used of the social media websites but can be said to be the most influential and trend-setting of them all. In an article published in January 2017, Superlinear tracked the evolution of South African politics through Twitter since 2012. The study claims that in 2012, sportsman and celebrities used the site most frequently, at 39% at the time.

The website goes on to include a category called 'ANC & Black influentials' which formed 12% of the Twitter community with 9% of that occupied by what was called 'Proudly SA & DA'. One could question the reasoning behind the choice of these descriptors, as it is almost concluded that, all black people on the site at the time were ANC members or supporters or were not 'Proudly SA' and that the DA supporters are not described by their race but by how they are proud to be South Africans, that's perhaps a debate for another day. The author argues that, at the time, the ANC still enjoyed much of the support of Black voters and so was active on Twitter through an official account but was surpassed by the DA in terms of MP involvement on Twitter. The author then asserts that, by 2015, with the ANC fast losing support, the community

of Black ‘influentials’ transformed into ‘Woke Twitter’. These were young Black influential people who supported the ideals of the ANC but not its current leader, President Jacob Zuma. These young people instead identified with a cause, African Nationalism. This group is claimed to have questioned the gains of the treaty of 1994 for the Black majority. Instead of the current dispensations, this youth identified with African leaders like Sankara, Lumumba, Nkrumah, Lembede and the PAC. With the onset of movements like #RhodesMustFall, #FeesMustFall and #OutsourcingMustFall between 2015 and 2016 came a stronger Black Twitter, a social organisation that seemed nonpartisan at the time but one that supports causes and movements.

With this background in mind, I will provide various definitions and descriptions of ‘Black Twitter’ as formulated by a number of commentators. Ramsey (2015) in Complex Magazine asserts that, ‘Black Twitter’ is a force that may not be easily understood by those who are not part of it. He adds that, the term “is used to describe a large network of Black Twitter users and their loosely coordinated interactions”. These interactions tend to accumulate into trending topics of discussion caused by the size of the network, interconnectedness of participants and unique activity at a given time. Mosiuoa (2014) interviewed Lerato Mannya for LiveSA on the subject. Mannya described ‘Black Twitter’ as “the central hub of credible, timeous, relevant information and recklessness. It’s basically chaos”. She continues to posit that “Black Twitter” is a microcosm of Black communities that discuss any issue or topic that affects Black people and “we relate better with each other on such a free, uncensored platform”.

Black Twitter is said to have started in USA where issues of social justice, human and minority rights were discussed but it quickly spread to South Africa, Africa and the rest of the Black world. Mannya added that, Black Twitter provides Black people the opportunity to relay their own stories from their own perspective; she added “in this small world of ours, we share glimpse of our lives with one another as told by us for us”. For example, she asserts, many South Africans imagined the USA as a dreamland of milk and honey until the continued exposure to American Black Twitter where “we got to see the injustices visited upon blacks in the USA” (Mosiuoa, 2014). Mainstream media does not typically cover the terrible conditions under which Black Americans live and as a result, Black people elsewhere were shocked and amazed at the exposure of cruelty (police brutality, abject poverty, severe drug abuse, and racism).

These disclosures have primarily happened on Black Twitter, through video, audio and written think-pieces. Mannya claims, along with SA Black Twitter, to have monitored the news coverage surrounding the shooting of teenager Mike Brown, where he was portrayed as a criminal who posed a threat to the police officer and deserved to die. On the contrary however, the video circulating on Black Twitter showed a different side of the story. Mannya observes that “we’re part of the media, but our manner of discussion is subordinate to a centre and the centre is suburban and white”. Mannya added that, the mainstream media do not always report on Black people/Black issues fairly and so ‘Black Twitter’ serves the purpose of self-narration for Black people. Mannya noted that, strikes in SA, a predominantly Black activity, are not usually covered fairly. Blacks are said to be destroying the economy, berated for destroying property or burning objects. However, the main cause of the strikes is hardly mentioned, that black people are still treated as fourth class citizens who get poor services from government and big business.

Those who are unfamiliar with the platform would perceive it as joke, because every issue is tackled with a pinch of humour on Black Twitter, almost as though blacks use humour as a coping mechanism. Perhaps one can mention Casimir (2017) observation of Haitians who also create joy for themselves in adverse conditions, through laughter, song and dance. Masemola for BizCommunity (2015) describes Black Twitter as ‘a cultural identity on the social network focussed on issues of interest to the Black community’. She posits that this should be seen as a space that permits Black expression, which did not previously have the platform to openly express its experiences and perceptions of the world around them. Users on Black Twitter share the particular experiences of being Black in the anti-Black world, in extremely humorous and sometimes serious ways.

On Black Twitter, you will find humorous hashtags like #GrowingUpBlack where Black parenthood is discussed at length and familiar experiences shared widely. Masemola (2015) also noted that, Black Twitter has been criticised as an ‘elitist watchdog’ that berates users based on ‘levels of blackness’. Users are monitored and others are criticised for sharing opinions that are seen to be ‘white’, this of course is wrong, according to Masemola (2015), as nobody has monopoly on how blackness should act or sound. As mentioned above, Black Twitter gives voice to previously ignored and

marginalised voices in South Africa. Masemola (2015) credits Black Twitter for allowing space for users to at the least discuss racial issues in a country built on the racialisation of the black, but one which subsequently shut down any discussions on said race as taboo especially when initiated by black people. Black Twitter has grown into an intellectual, cultural, artistic and influential space that has a life of its own, below I tackle the question of who is on Black Twitter and where this community is found. Is there a specific button black people press to join? Blackness, through 'Black Twitter', is engaged in cultural conversations that seek to re-create, rebuild and re-imagine Black culture on our own terms. On the question of how 'Black is Black Twitter', Sharma (2013) argues that, it is difficult to ascertain user's ethnic background on Twitter, due to the fact that Twitter does not require such classification from users when they register. This poses a challenge to anyone studying Twitter trends, as one does not want to engage in racial profiling therefore one struggles to ascertain who is who.

Sharma (2013) however, agrees that 'blacktags' that focus mainly on topics of interest to Black people and Black culture unite Twitter users in cultural exchanges and perhaps this is a criterion by which one 'racialise' Black Twitter. Sharma (2013) also argued that, non-blacks are not barred or excluded from these cultural conversations but the lack of experience in Black culture sifts through participants and determines who does and does not participate. In this vein, Florini (2013), in her observation of American 'Black Twitter', posits that Blackness and the performance of Black culture is done through the process of 'signifyin'. She added that, signifyin' is theorised as a cultural expression that came to the USA with enslaved Africans who sought to keep some semblance of their roots.

They would use it as a creative outlet as well as a tool to pass secret messages to one another, this dome through singing, dancing, speaking loudly and acting out scenes. Florini (2013: 225) adds that signifyin' can be seen as an 'alternative message form, selected for its artistic merit'. She asserts that, "because of discourses, histories and contexts invoked by the genre, the act of signifyin' aligns users with Black cultural identities". For this reason, participants require good forms of cultural knowledge and cultural competencies which hence manage inclusion and exclusion (Florini, 2013). South African Black Twitter is not necessarily organised around race only; there are

other mitigating factors. For example, users on Black Twitter are those who care about, are active in speaking up about issues of injustice against Black people here and elsewhere in the world. It is unfortunate that the world as whole and South Africa in particular is itself organised around race and the brunt of inequality, poverty, unemployment are issues experienced disproportionately by blacks. Black Twitter lends voice to these issues and holds the government, private business and white society in general accountable for injustice and racism. Masemola (2015) stresses that, being Black does not automatically guarantee one an uncontested space on Black Twitter, it is rather ones 'authentic' expression of said blackness and their concern for the Black community at large that gains acceptance. Black Twitter therefore is a space on which blackness has created on an otherwise white and western platform; it is a forced entity that arises out of the sheer desperation of the Black condition. South African Black Twitter gets criticism for being an elitist, middle class invention that speaks on poor people's condition from the comfort of their suburban homes.

This might be so and it might be valid but one cannot and should not discount some of the uses and successes of this platform thus far in exposing the country's disdain for its Black citizens. Also, blackness is not synonymous with the 'Black reservations' of the apartheid regime and it can express itself from wherever it reside because living in suburbs does not immunise one from anti-Black racism. South African Black Twitter has elevated some into 'Tweleb' status; which resembles 'twitter celebrities' who have gained fame and a large following over the years due to their online presence, humour, political views and activism. People like the chosen intellectuals, Khaya Dlanga, Dr. Sindisiwe van Zyl, or Ottilia Sibanda to mention a few. These people are usually at the forefront of discourse on Black Twitter; they usually start debates and get people thinking about particular issues at a particular time.

Black Twitter is not just Black space on Twitter, it is a community of people who debate, agree, disagree, have twitter wars (twars) but ultimately it is space consisting of people who share similar experiences of being Black in a neo-colonial, anti-Black world. Black Twitter is the ultimate co-creation of blackness with little or no dilution, speaking for itself, about itself, on behalf of itself. 'Black Twitter' holds up a mirror to the South African society and forces it to look at itself, as observed when Monday 3 April 2017

was declared #BlackMonday by interest group #SaveSA protesting the cabinet reshuffle. ‘Black Twitter’ erupted in unison, questioning the selective outrage of the predominantly white and Black liberal interest group that never wore Black in remembrance of the Black Marikana miners who were gunned down for demanding a living wage. ‘Black Twitter’ bemoaned the organisation for their ability to choose to wear Black on a particular day and take it off the next asserting, ‘We are Black everyday’. Black Twitter questioned the exact people #SaveSA was trying to save if it never lends its resources to help Black protestors when they fight for basic human necessities like water and shelter. Black Twitter has also opened up avenues for Black people to help and support one another, business owners advertise their products and services, students seeking help with outstanding fees are assisted, the qualified and unemployed can be linked to information and jobs. Mannya (2014) observes that compared to ‘White Twitter’, ‘Black Twitter’ is ‘cynical, angry and funny’ all the same time; perhaps as direct reflection and expression of Black life in general. Among those who are prominent on Black Twitter are influential industry giants, politicians, socialites and children of struggle icons. All of these different people help put Black issues on the agenda and highlight the injustices visited on Black people the world over.

South African Black Twitter is important and necessary for a number of reasons, with all its faults and shortcomings. The platform and its influencers are useful for putting racial inequality, racism, and oppression on the social agenda in a country that has thrived on the silencing of Black pain the past two decades. It is no doubt that the country’s cruel past tinged in Black blood has enforced an unwritten but powerful muzzle on any public discussions of everything that Black people have gone through at the hands of white domination. This muzzle has persisted for decades to a point where it is causing a boiling over of pain and chaos in ‘Black reservations’ because the nation has not healed. Black Twitter is a small minority that has opened up these conversations and is therefore setting the agenda for politicians and civil society to do the same. For the first time after the euphoria of 1994, Blackness speaks for itself about its unique experiences in the world.

Cyril (2014) commenting on the activities of Black Twitter when Mike Brown was shot by police in Ferguson USA suggests that the platform provides ‘counterspin’. Adding that Black people are militarised and criminalised in the media and the habit was the

same then as Mike was portrayed as a criminal and the police officer an innocent fearful man. Black Twitter in that instance provided the much needed “other side of the coin” in a story that would have otherwise been ignored by mainstream media.
Cyril (2014) adds that, “we need to tell our own stories in our own voice and not wait until somebody else decides the story is important”. The media marginalise our stories, because we are not seen our stories are not seen and so ‘Black Twitter’ represents the Black voice on topics. She argued that, Black people all over the world need to realise that the Black voice is in jeopardy and they need to fight to maintain their social presence and activism. Black Twitter has united Black people all over the world, although the experiences of blackness may differ based on one’s history and location, there are major similarities that are worthy of being shared. Hashtags become “blacktags” when uniquely Black experiences are shared by Black Twitter users all over the world under tags like #GrowingUpBlack or #GrowingUpWithBlackParents or #OnlyInTheHood (Yang 2016).

4.3 Black Twitter: Speaking while Black

In this section, I explore the ways in which Black Twitter not only shapes but decides for itself how it uses technologies and the power derived from those choices. Black Twitter is the medium of Black communicative practice, a safe space where issues relevant to blackness are ‘spoken’ about freely. Black Twitter has become a legitimate space not only for ‘Black speak’ but also for Black protest, it is viewed as noisy, overly-sensitive, and irrational by those who have gotten too used to Black silence. However, blackness can no longer remain silent. Black Twitter has been involved in many hashtag movements, all meant to protect and defend the dignity of blackness that has been dragged through the mud by the anti-Black world and country. I will use the recent cases of #PennySparrow, #PretoriaGirls, #ChrisHart and the #ColignyAttack as examples of blacks in protest over and about their oppression and dismissal in various ways below.

These cases demonstrate Black Twitter and the communicative practice of blackness on the platform. The encouragement, linking, facilitation of Black dialogue and protest is one of the many successes of Black Twitter that demonstrate the growing influence of the platform at giving voice to the voiceless. At this time, I would like to venture into

a discussion I call ‘speaking while black’ through which I argue that Black Twitter has legitimised a culture, people, experiences, and feelings that do not have reach in mainstream media. I argue that not only is Black Twitter a nice space to just “speak” but it is also a cultural expression where Black cultural performance occurs, to affirm blackness and unique Black experiences. The phenomenon of “speaking while black” is as strange as the Black existence itself because the various savage acts that have been committed against Black people have sought to ensure that they remain forever silent. Blacks are expected to swallow their pain behind closed doors, never to speak of it in public as their pain directly implicates the dominant society. Blacks are also called upon to be silent about their blackness, which must be toned down to nothing and suppressed to make others comfortable. Colonial-apartheid has also silenced Black culture, branding all forms of Black culture as primitive, backward, demonic and superstition thereby forcing its inevitable marginalisation. Black Twitter brings to the centre what was previously the ‘counterspace’, a place in the margins for blackness while whiteness has assumed normativity (Brock, 2012), (Linder et al, 2016). Having gained centre-stage in its own stories, blackness owns its narrative agency to speak for itself.

Therefore, when a Woolworths SA store lines up black-looking mannequins connected to one another with ropes around their necks, ‘Black Twitter’ erupts in expressive tones about the re-enactment of slavery and how this is a trigger. The store and many others are then forced to employ some sensitivity and foresight when adverts and displays are decided upon, because blackness is no longer silent. Blackness has found a space to make legitimate its embodied knowledge and memory that is triggered by insensitive displays of aggressive ignorance. This is as noted when Appletiser released an advert featuring two women, one Black and the other white with the tagline ‘every brunette needs a blonde girlfriend’. Black Twitter enforces the Black woman’s Blackness and berates the company for erasing her being by calling her brunette when she’s clearly black.

This carries a ripple effect that demonstrates to every organisation that blackness affirms us and we in turn affirm it, we do not aspire to be white or white looking. Whiteness will no longer be the standard that we to aspire to. Such pure affirmation of Blackness takes a non-conformist and non-assimilation stance that shifts the way the

‘Other’ sees the Black and himself completely. Because if the Black no longer wants to be white, like him, what does that say about his position of dominance over the black’s consciousness, where does that leave the mystique and veil of purity under which whiteness has survived over the centuries. Blackness, through speaking, starts the process of regaining its power, re-membering its being and re-claiming its voice. Black Twitter has also enhanced the political involvement and interest of Black people, because blackness is a political existence that lives in political environments. In this vein and considering how much of a fight Black life in general is; the involvement of Black people in political discourse cannot be a disadvantage. Mannya (2014) noted that, although Black Twitter may seem like ‘it’s all jokes’, some serious discussions do take place even through the humour. Most importantly, blacks are starting to seek ideological homes that speak to blackness outside political parties, so people may disagree on partisanship but agree on the need to unite and seek justice for displaced, dispossessed and oppressed Africans.

An article on Superlinear (2017) observes that blacks tend to rally behind a cause, such as #FeesMustFall and #RhodesMustFall more often than political organisations. Black Twitter has also made the discussion of racial issues and racism less taboo, allowing the sharing of Black experiences in the anti-Black world to occur. Black Twitter provides valuable commentary when incidents of racism occur, whether overt or covert. For the first time since 1994, the experiences of Blackness living in a racialised society with day-to-day micro and macro expressions of racism are brought to the fore and being recorded as such, directly from the mouth of blackness. So when #SaveSA co-opts Blackness into shallow demonstrations of ‘unity’, Black Twitter questions the motives of this unity and defends Black dignity. If one were to examine Black Twitter using any model of communication, it would be probably be described as noise, an undesirable and unwanted interference in an otherwise perfect communication process. That is because blackness has no place in the world so it does not have a place even on social media.

However, when blackness asserts itself affirmed in its blackness everyone sits up in utter disbelief. That is what is currently happening in the wide web when blackness speaks from blackness through Black Twitter. Black Twitter arises out of a particular situation; there is a fundamental push in the Black community that forces it to carve

spaces for Black expression where there would usually be none. Black Twitter is a performance of solidarity among blacks in the anti-Black world. Many in the dominant society have questioned why Black Twitter analyses almost every occurrence in the country through race, white supremacists who proclaim colour-blindness or rainbow-nationalism call this ‘race bating’. They claim that not everything happens from the point of view of race and racism; they question the politicisation of race. They fail to realise that every day, everything in Blackness is political, and that in South Africa politics are Black and white. Henceforth, Black Twitter becomes a powerful mirror through which the country should examine itself and the unfulfilled promises of 1994. Hashtag activism has managed to eliminate some of the dangers that have come with Black protest for basic rights. Historically, the Black is positioned as a criminal that must be monitored by the oppressive system of colonial-apartheid, he was previously monitored as an individual and even more so in a crowd of his people where he is more dangerous. Although Davenport, Soule and Armstrong (2011) conducted their study in the USA case of Black protest, their findings can be generalised to any Black protest across the world. They find that, the ‘protesting while black’ phenomenon can be scientifically proven and that Black protestors are perceived and treated significantly differently compared to white protestors.

Davenport et la (2011) find proof that Black protestors are more likely to monitored by police during their protests, and they are also more likely to be met with police force/violence. Although, they argue, one cannot claim that this is due to racism at individual police individual; one can place the burden at the systemic and systematic anti-blackness of law enforcement. They posit, ‘The protestor’s race poses a threat to the police on the scene” and must be carefully guarded (Davenport et al, 2011). This brings the famous image of #FeesMustFall at Rhodes University where white students formed a “human shield” to protect Black students against beatings from charging police. It can be argued that white students, fully aware of their humanity-proper and their privileged place in the world shielded the subhuman Black students against law-enforcement that is designed to violate them without cause.

4.4 The Social Shaping of Technology

At this time, I endeavor to explain the racial necessity out of which Black Twitter

derives. I examine the organic formation of this platform through the lens of social shaping of technological use based on the needs of society at a particular time. Black Twitter proves that, technologies are not hypodermic needles that exclusively exert their influence on people and communities but on whom communities themselves have no influence. Black Twitter depicts the ways in which society shapes technological inventions and uses them to their own ends. This perspective discredits the notion of technological determinism, an approach that stems from the belief that technologies develop autonomously from society and that they shape society but are not in turn shaped by society (Mackay and Gillespie, nd). Technological determinism posits that technologies exist outside society but at the same time, they influence social change. In its most extreme cases, technological determinism claims that technology is 'the most significant determinant of the nature of society' (Mackay and Gillespie, nd). In this way, society is seen as passive recipients of technologies who are affected in one-way fashion but have no say in the development or use of the technologies. This notion is clearly fallacious because it does not take into account the fact that most technological developments come to be as a result of extensive research into the needs of society, therefore even their development and use is based on the society and not the other way round. It can't be said that technologies have no impact on society, but one must admit that this impact is not automatically built into technologies but depends on a broader range of social, political and economic factors. For example, poor communities who may not have access to different forms of sophisticated technologies will not be impacted to the same scale as wealthy communities who can experiment with different kinds of technologies.

The Social Shaping of Technology (SST) perspective does not completely discount technological determinism but points to its naïve assumptions and serves as a much needed corrective measure and antidote to its claims. The SST looks at technological developments holistically and rejects any form of determinism, whether social, economic or technological (Williams and Edge, 1996). The SST is concerned with influencing the development of technologies at policy level where major decisions are made based on obscure information. In essence, SST calls for the consideration of society in the development of technology dissemination policies. It highlights the complex nature of the relationship between technologies and society and stresses the back and forth influence between the two entities (Williams and Edge, 1996). SST

opened up questions about technologies in society; first it stresses the negotiability of technology where groups and certain forces shape technologies to their needs. Secondly, SST highlighted the question of irreversibility, the extent and manner in which choices in may be foreclosed. This means that people are not passive recipients of technology but they make conscious technological choices based on various frames of reference. The SST focused mainly on the establishment of policies that emphasise the role of the user as well as the supplier and the need for linkages between them (Williams and Edge, 1996). Among other issues, SST researchers are concerned with establishing ways in which social, institutional, economic, and cultural factors shape the development, form, direction and outcomes of technology. The SST therefore goes beyond traditional approaches that tend to be concerned with only examining 'social impacts' of technology. SST also wanted to know what shapes the technologies themselves and the way in which these impacts are achieved (Williams and Edge, 1996).

The SST is desirable because it proves clearly that, technologies do not follow a predetermined course of development and are as much impacted by society as they impact society. At its formation, Twitter was the usual technological application that would spread Western ideologies and centre the experiences and problems of the west in conversation on an online platform. The Black community has instead reshaped the online application into what they want it to be for them. And so Black Twitter comes into existence. Although the platform is said to be an open platform that can be accessed by anyone who has access to the relevant hardware and software, Black Twitter exposes the 'closure' in open technologies. This is to posit that although social media like Twitter are said to be open access technologies where just about anything can be shared/posted/discussed.

The existence of Black Twitter proves to us that, this is not the case, shown by the number of Black activists who get 'suspended or expelled' on the app when they speak on white supremacy or racism. Twitter still tries to stifle 'Black speak', even though this is its most lucrative section of the app. Black Twitter, as the name suggests, is a subsection of the wide social media network that focuses on the needs and issues of Black people. Black Twitter is proof that technological development is shaped, reshaped and negotiated by people based on their needs and preferences. To

everyone's surprise, African and American Black Twitter now make up the majority of twitter users and activity which was clearly not the creator's vision. I have highlighted some of the success and uses of Black Twitter in serving as the communicative medium on which Black speak performs itself, fostering links between the oppressed, and giving voice to the voiceless. Black Twitter manifests Black solidarity in real time, for those who have been forced into silence through violence.

4.5 On Black Solidarity and Black Twitter: A communicative Practice

Black Solidarity can loosely be defined as the political, social, economic, and psycho-social solidarity of Black people the world over in the face of oppressive global anti-Black systems. This concept is the lesser known subset of Black Consciousness, it calls not only for the love of oneself but for solidarity between the oppressed and consolidated efforts at emancipation. Black solidarity is a conception that arises out of the condition of Blackness, by Black people, for the advancement of the Black agenda, in the interest of Black people (More, 2009). One might wonder what Black Solidarity as a concept has to do with the study of Communications. I argue here that, as I have posited Black Twitter as the communication field for Black struggle, Black Solidarity is then at the crux of communicative practices in the place of blackness.

In previous sections I situated Black Twitter as the communication plane on which Blackness speaks for itself, thinks through its pain and discusses ways to freedom from oppressive systems. This section looks at the ways in which Black solidarity manifests through Black Twitter and how these ties should strengthen. I argue here that, Black solidarity is the communicative practice of a people that experience the world in similar ways; this concept is brought about by the needs of people that live through similar conditions of existing in the anti-Black world. These experiences alone are grounds for meaningful communication patterns. Shelby (2002) shows us that there a number of different conceptions that fall under the school of thought of Black solidarity. Shelby (2002) mentions two, the first is the "common oppression theory" that calls upon Black people to unite and work together because they face the same oppressions as a result of their race. This theory claims that they can only overcome this oppression through solidarity.

The second is the ‘collective self-determination theory’, it asserts that, Blacks should unite and work together to reach a point of self-determination. This theory places emphasis on the fact that Blacks have unique racial, ethnic, cultural and national identity and they have the responsibility to preserve these as they work towards being a self-determining people. Both schools of thought call for solidarity in the fight against racial oppression but the former and less radical ‘common oppression theory’ only acknowledges the existence of anti-Black racism and calls for collective strategies of alleviating it impact. The latter is seen as less enthusiastic about the ending of anti-Black racism and it stresses the need for Black people to work together and be self-autonomous in social, economic, political and cultural sectors so that the effects of anti-blackness are less felt (Shelby 2002). It is vital to understand that Black people are not a homogeneous group that sees solidarity in exactly the same ways, some are concerned about preserving the unique cultural identities that come with blackness and that is acceptable. Others are concerned with ‘tangible’ results like improving the Black economy and building lasting security for Black people and that too is acceptable. At the core of Black solidarity is the realisation that, although we may differ as a people we experience the world in similar ways and are looking for relief from anti-blackness and that solidarity helps us think through anti-blackness collectively.

However, Hoston (2009) asserts that Black solidarity promotes loyalty, devotion and pride in the race as it bonds against the various levels of oppression. Hoston (2009) agrees with More (2009) that, Black solidarity is a necessary response to Black oppression and not an oppressive school of thought. Hoston (2009) proves this point by positing that Black solidarity has historically been born out of a particular racial context in whose absence said solidarity may not have materialised. I posit here that Black Twitter therefore, through expressions of Black culture, use of Black vocabulary, telling of Black stories and sharing of Black experiences, in acts of signifyin’ or blackness performed is Black solidarity in action. Black Twitter” is a space where blackness prides itself in its uniqueness, its ability to create joy in adversity, it is a platform used to inject dignity back in Black culture. Using a different line of reasoning, Brock (2012) noted that, the performance of Black culture should be seen as the self-assertion of a ‘conflicted identity shaped by multiple discourses'.

Brock (2012) invokes Fanon who argued that, Blackness is created through anecdotes, myths and stereotypes to fit a particular narrative and should rid itself of internalising such stories. Blackness is also engaged in protest through the re-creation of its culture outside of lines drawn by whiteness through conquest and oppression and positioning itself as the 'universal marker of civility' (Brock, 2012). Blackness on Black Twitter moves beyond fear, beyond stereotypes and expresses itself as it sees fit without seeking approval from the self-proclaimed civilised 'Other'. Through Black Twitter, young Black intellectuals in all manner and form are engaged in "Black re-creation" of selves who have adorned white masks for centuries. This recreation is negotiated with the people as they seek to express blackness in ways that are satisfactory to them. Black solidarity then brings the oppressed together and guides the negotiations that seek to result in a dignified self. Black Twitter provides a conducive environment for the Black community and Black intellectuals to engage in meaningful conversation about who we are, who we want to be and how we get there. Black culture is placed in the centre barring the exotification of Blackness, but in appreciation of our similarities within our different experiences. Black Twitter permits the co-existence of differences and heterogeneity in blackness, an acceptance of blackness in all its shades if you will.

Black intellectuals who are artists, poets, musicians, writers, and academics all engage in the co-creation and re-imagination of blackness with their community. Black public intellectuals are actively engaged in the process of 'decolonial healings' with the communities they are part of, they take lessons from the embodied memories of death that exist in Black communities and construct ways to recreate blackness on our own terms. The Black public intellectual that no longer seeks assimilation into and the recognition of whiteness is the ultimate goal that both intellectuals and communities are working towards. Blackness should no longer be an invited guest in violent white spaces that use blackness to prove their acceptance of 'diversity', artistic intellectual Patricia Kaersenhout (2013) argues that blacks will not be used to sanitise the violence of whiteness towards people of colour anymore.

She adds that blackness will no longer be Black dots on white cubes in the art world, or part of the invisible interior with no voice and no face. She argues that in the art world as in other spaces, Black people should be accepted with all their baggage as

they bring bodily experiences of oppression that carries through generations (Kaersenhout in de Velde, 2013). Communication in Blackness within the anti-Black world, occurs in both verbal and non-verbal ways, this is to say solidarity can be spoken or unspoken but it is solidarity that underpins all struggles for liberation. In this section, I unpack the study of Communication from the place of blackness and tie it with Black Solidarity. Communication is widely understood as the transmission or exchange of messages within the self as well as between two or more people. At this stage, I will elaborate on the various contexts in which communication occurs generally but specifically in the zone of non-being. Communication as a field of study is guilty of ignoring this zone and speaking from an elevated blind positionality that assumes no accountability for the people it communicates for/with/towards. Communication is said to occur first and foremost on the Intrapersonal level, this is the act of communicating within oneself. Du Plessis (2015:143) claims that, we use intrapersonal communication to "organise our thoughts, silently respond to what we see and hear around us or mentally plan how to achieve some goal". The emphasis in intrapersonal communication is said to be the self, its identity in the world and how it relates with the world around it.

Du Plessis (2015: 143) rightly posits that, the self does not exist in isolation or exclusively in itself, but is in communion with others. The self therefore, is a product of its environment. From the time a child is born, he/she receives messages from the community regarding identity, belonging, culture, language, traditions etc. Humans develop a sense of self by internalising positive or negative messages from others; they then sift and sort through these messages in order to make sense of the self in the world. Du Plessis (2015: 144) points to a process through which this sorting happens as including decoding, integration, memory, schemata and encoding. Therefore, one received messages from the world around them; they decode the messages in order to decipher their meaning. These messages are then integrated, that is, we put various pieces of information together, compare, create analogies, draw distinctions to form a complete picture of what we are being receiving. We then use our memory to store intrapersonal communication to be recalled in the future.

Messages are lastly encoded in this final organising process in which we encode messages to ourselves as a response to the decoding process that occurs in the

beginning. The process of intrapersonal communication and its influence on Black Solidarity is an intrinsic and interpretative one. The oppressed receive negative messages about themselves from the world regularly; therefore, the moment of solidarity begins internally. One observes anti-Black information and begins to encode it, interpret it, organise it, compare it to information that is stored in memory and then decodes it. As Du Plessis (2015: 151) posits that, "one uses intrapersonal communication to sort through negative and positive messages about the self". The Black subject uses intrapersonal communication to sort through largely negative messages about everyone in the world who looks like them. When Sandra Bland dies suspiciously in police custody in the USA, Black women all the world are forced to sort through the images and memory of maimed, murdered, raped, enslaved and dispossessed Black bodies. This form intrapersonal communication begins the process of seeking solidarity with others who experience the world in similar ways. Black people the world seek reassurance from others that the sudden resurgence of traumatic images they experience are common, and real. Black solidarity and how it manifests on Black Twitter then serves as the much needed assurance that these feelings are valid. Further, communication is said to occur in the interpersonal context.

To this effect, Holtzhausen (2015: 162) uses Buber's theory of interpersonal relations to describe this phenomenon. She starts, "by positing that by their very nature, humans are communicating beings". She claims that, people are always in the process of communicating with the world, making sense of situations we find ourselves in and sharing these with those around us. Following Buber's assertions, Holtzhausen (2015: 162) emphasises the importance of dialogue when communication occurs between people. The reverse, she claims, would be an undesirable monologue that leaves communication incomplete between participants. Buber's model states that interpersonal communication occurs at two levels, the 'I-you' relationship and 'I-it' relationship. In the 'I-you' relationship, participants are said to approach one another with "mutual respect, sincerity and honesty with the intention to become subjectively involved in a reciprocal relationship" (Holtzhausen, 2015: 162).

In this form of communication, both participants engage one another with their whole beings without imposition of one on the other. In this idealistic relationship, participants come to the table as who they are and accept each other on those terms. None of the

participants attempts to impose their own beliefs on the other but they recognise and celebrate differences in an effort to create the world of ‘we’ as they form ‘we’ relationships. On the contrary, the ‘I-it’ relationship is an unequal space in which the ‘it’ is not viewed as an equal subject but an object to be manipulated for the ends of the ‘I’. It is said that the main concern of the ‘I’ is to convert/change/persuade the other to his ways of thinking and doing without considering the needs of the other. This relationship relegates the ‘it’ into silence, a place where the ‘it’ has no opinion but always agrees with the views of the ‘I’. In perspective, Buber’s model portrays the relationship between the coloniser and the dehumanised perfectly albeit without actually saying the words. For this purpose of this section, I will focus on how the ‘I-it’ relationship which is the perpetual zone of blackness in communication and Black Solidarity. The dynamics described as the ‘I-it’ relationship, those that lack empathy, understanding, openness and basic humanity are those of the colonial conquest of the Global South by the West and the resultant rules of engagements. In this strange and twisted relationship, the South is the perpetual student of the West who must learn, accept, practice and perform the customs of the West without question or interrogation.

The coloniser, much like the ‘I’, is constantly engaged in a civilising mission whenever he encounters the unrefined native who must be taught to be human-becoming but never actually ‘human being’. Black solidarity is the interpersonal therapeutic space in the face of the debilitating violence of the anti-Black world. Blackness converges in common memory, with common experience to collectively confront the pain of anti-Black racism. Lately, blackness has used its limited influence on social media (Black Twitter) to raise awareness about issues that affect the group. For example, one member of an online platform will post a message and based on its ability to aggravate, amuse, or sadden people, it trends and the said issue is collectively thought through and solved if possible. Communication takes place in a variety of spaces for a variety of reasons; Black Solidarity strengthens and grounds the bonds of communication practice in the experiences of a people that is usually silent. Black Twitter becomes the communicative space in which the communicative practice of Black Solidarity takes place.

Black Twitter as advanced below is not a space that forms itself out the blue, there is a greater racial need for the almost organic formation of this space that needs to be examined. I argue that there is a fundamental need within Blackness that leads to the formation and conservation of Black Twitter as a political and politicised space for the culture to perform, protect, defend, re-dignify, remake, and reimagine itself. The conception of Black solidarity is one that emerges out of racial need, for a racial imperative and for racial conservation. Historically, blacks engaged in activities of solidarity when the race or community is under threat. Black Solidarity is therefore a strategic responses to forces that threaten the human rights and liberties of a people solely because of their race. The oppressed are constantly meditating about and confronted with the question of how to respond to their oppression. When they are categorised as a group based on their physical attributes and dehumanised because of these attributes, what is the proper response to this violence? More (2009: 28) suggests “collective identity and solidarity”. The problem that faces the Black community is and always has been white racism as predicated by Biko (2004: 25); as white racism is a system of collective oppression, collective antidotes are necessary to realise liberation.

As I advance this concept, I would like to base it on the assertion that, “Black solidarity is a necessary condition for racial emancipation” (More 2009: 25). I assert this point here as a base of the arguments to be made herein, that the conditions that confront blackness can only be alleviated through deliberate racial solidarity. Much like the decolonial theory, Black solidarity is a product of racial need that emerges out of the zone of non-being formulated by the oppressed themselves. Both are responses to “a racial threat and a common racial response to the danger” (More, 2009). More (2009) sets the scene by asking this question and rebuking immediately the liberal suggestion that perhaps assimilation and integration are the answer and he historicises Black identity and solidarity as a preferred movement against social injustice. Black people in South African and elsewhere have been victims of oppression, human rights violations, marginalisation and racism for centuries and through these experiences have used solidarity as a strategy to fight for their rights.

Collectivism is the essence of African society before the colonial encounter, of course having been changed and diluted over the centuries, people have mainly suffered

these injustices in small groups and individually until an event or occurrence shakes the whole community. More (2009) unashamedly denounces the liberal's solution of the advancement of "individual human" rights by asserting that racism is a collective enterprise inflicted on the collective Black community globally and therefore remedies cannot be individualistic in nature. Individualism denies the lived experiences and realities of entire groups of people, it instead places the burden of survival on the individual who is in turn affected by systems that are targeted at the whole group. This leads to unsuccessful efforts to combat white supremacy at individual level and it causes confusion in liberatory movements. Liberal individualism conceptualises solidarity as an offence on human rights through the assumption that classifying people in terms of race, gender or class is in itself oppressive. This logic fails to recognise that the classification of people or the embracing of differences is not a problem but the systemic response those differences is what is at trial here. The Black is oppressed as a group solely because he is Black and response to this condition cannot be achieved at individual level. Liberalism is at its core a white concept, it stems from the logic of a people who have the luxury to be perceived as individuals and not as representative of a whole race. It also assumes ontological density that is embodied in the individual and his race, historically the Black is not afforded the same opportunity. This is why liberalism does not work where blackness is concerned. For added context, Hoston (2009) posits that Black solidarity is a subsection of Black Consciousness together with Black autonomy, Black nationalism, Black identity and Black separatism. He adds that overall, Black Consciousness is the belief that individual Blacks "share a common fate with a larger Black group and that the welfare of the larger group coincides with the welfare of the individual".

This ideology makes clear that although different, Black experience is essentially unique to the collective and individuals in the collective. Black consciousness encourages pride in the Black race, self-sustainability, and responsibility towards one another (Hoston, 2009). On the same vein, More (2009) embraces the same logic as he defines Black solidarity as 'the acceptance of racial identity and grouping of the Black race'. This should not be mistaken as positioning blackness as a superior race, like white supremacy, but the recognition of different races that exist in the world and pride in one's own race. To this point, he asserts that Black people use race to promote loyalty, devotion and pride and to fight against the social, political and economic

inequality that stifles the prosperity of the community. It is very clear therefore, that Black solidarity does not advocate for the hate, oppression or subjugation of any other human race, but promotes pride in the Black race and encourages the continuation of the fight for emancipation. Black solidarity, the lesser-known subsection of Black consciousness, encourages political involvement, activism, Black pride and consolidated efforts to ensure the prosperity of the community (More, 2009). The emphasis of Black solidarity is on the 'collective', the belief that the prosperity of the collective automatically ensures the prosperity of individuals in the collective.

Those who advocate for Black solidarity are usually introduced to and embrace Black consciousness first and that leads them to the realisation of the importance of solidarity among oppressed peoples (Hoston, 2009). More (2009) carries the argument further and argues that Black solidarity, and by extension, Black consciousness, makes visible the invisible. Within global anti-Black racism as a system, 'blacks are and experience themselves as invisible: to see that Black is to see every other black'. For a Black person to assert themselves as an individual within a collective, moreover an individual who affirms their Blackness but also understands the communality of Black experience, presents an upset for the anti-Black world. To demonstrate some of the gains to be achieved through solidarity, More (2009) uses the youth of 1976 as a case study of Black solidarity in the face of a threat against the race. At the time, Black schools were constantly under the thumb of the oppressive government's police forces who were dispatched to enforce Afrikaans as the language of teaching and learning.

Students from different walks of life viewed this as a transgression against their humanity and decided to protest. This led to the shooting murder of Hector Pieterson and Hastings Ndlovu. At this point, it was clear that blacks were no longer taking their oppression timidly and were organising movements that would challenge the racist regime. More (2009) sums up that the concept of Black solidarity therefore does not arise out of racist intentions but arises against racist and sexist intentions. The realisation that people are different, embracing these differences is not racist but positioning one race as superior and others as inferior is racist. More (2009: 28) further argues, "if the problem is racism, and racism is predicated on race, race becomes the legitimate ground and point of departure for emancipatory solidarity". Those who dismiss Black solidarity as a racist movement fail to recognise the race-specific nature

of oppression and they certainly fail to suggest any viable options for the Black community.

Critiques of this concept, who claim that race is a social construct and does not exist, ignore, dismiss, and silence the unique experiences of oppression of people of colour who were dehumanised because of their 'otherness' (More, 2009). These critiques do not take into account the coloniality or "westernisation" of the world and how they are advocating for blackness to commit race suicide and assimilate to whiteness. They advocate for blackness to minimise itself and cease the fight for Black causes and for blackness to collapse itself into the "human condition" that does not recognise its unique history. It is not a shock that Black solidarity, physical or ideological in the anti-Black world is frowned upon by many as it is viewed as "radical" or "racist". In South Africa during colonial-apartheid, blacks were not allowed to been seen gathering in large numbers because any Black solidarity was unconstitutional as the time. This could spell trouble for those involved, ranging from jail terms, torture and death. The various systems of oppression have made it clear that solidarity in Blackness is a dangerous ideology or activity to undertake. If one observes closely, Black solidarity even in student movements like #FeesMustFall or #RhodesMustFall is always met with force and brutality from westernised institutions. Perhaps organically or by design, solidarity occurs on Black Twitter.

Black Twitter is Black Solidarity in practice, because Black Twitter is a political project established by blacks, for blacks, about blacks, on behalf of blacks and in the interest of blacks. In the anti-Black world that meets blackness with grave injustice, dispossession, enslavement and dehumanisation, blackness should find collective ways to combat such injustices. Black Twitter is ideological and physical solidarity in action, who's role is to speak out about the structural conditions of blackness in South Africa and globally. As pointed above, blackness is invisible in the anti-Black world and when it makes itself visible fears of violence are invoked in those who have violated the community. In this view, one Black person speaking against injustice or oppression is but a Black dot in the white tube whereas a trend on Black Twitter with thousands of blacks in protest is hard to ignore.

Black Twitter unapologetically centres the existential conditions of blackness in a world that is usually closed to it; it does not seek assimilation but the unreserved acceptance of Black humanity. Black Twitter is resistance against a world that does not want blackness. It is the inaudible made loud, the invisible made visible. Black Twitter is solidarity in protest against conditions that result in conditions of war and early death in blackness. South African Black Twitter represents the 'children of Mandela' who will no longer keep silent about the continued subjugation, oppression, exclusion and exploitation. Black Twitter is the co-creation of blackness, by blacks, in the interest of blacks, on the global stage that usually allows only white players in. As More (2009) demands, the Black will only defeat his oppressor once he denounces the individuality of his making and combine Black efforts as they seek justice. More (2009: 27) uses the youth uprising of 1976 as an example of a time when a racial threat forced the young people of Soweto into a violent encounter with apartheid regime's security forces. In this instance, the youth recognized the lawlessness of the "laws of the land" and decided to revolt against them as they were clearly formed to oppress and not protect them. The youth proved that, an unjust law is no law at all and so the people are under no obligation to abide by it. In the case of South Africa in fact, laws were created especially for the exclusion of blacks from the economy, social life, land ownership and mineral wealth of the country therefore blacks had the duty and obligation to revolt. In this vein, I would like to highlight the 'solidarity' in the various activities of Black Twitter that have been called 'guuuurl feminism', 'race baiting' and 'selective outrage' by the likes of Helen Zille and similar racists.

Perhaps one of the best examples of solidarity among the oppressed on Black Twitter is a phenomenon called "Black Twitter do your thing", this occurs when racist speech is observed, or a student needs help paying fees, a family has lost a house in a storm and needs help, a graduate needs a job etc. In these and many other instances, Black Twitter rallies together to lend a hand, speak up, protest or help out. Black Twitter disregards the 'I' in the Black condition and centres the "We" that is collectively affected by similar conditions. When any act of racism, oppression, exploitation or indignity inflicted on a Black person makes it to Black Twitter, solidarity in dealing with said exploitation is instantly demonstrated. Blacks have demonstrated enormous ability to pull their collective power and ensure that these injustices are exposed and dealt with.

As mentioned above, blackness is collectively oppressed by whiteness and so Black solidarity becomes the collective response to said oppression. Black Twitter answers the question posed by More (2009), when a people is oppressed collectively based on their race, they can only fight for emancipation and speak out against their oppression collectively. Black Twitter jolts blackness out of ‘rainbow nationalism’ and forces Blackness to face its oppression head on. More (2009) calls, through Black solidarity, for unity in the Black liberation struggle and decisive ways of winning our freedom. In this vein, Black solidarity is Black activism against anti-Black racism is performed through Black Twitter. As posited in Fanon ([1952] 2008), blackness in its current state is a creation of whiteness, instituted in order to absolve whiteness of its savage acts through 'othering’ and dehumanisation. At this point, the Black has been left with the massive task of re-membering herself and picking up the pieces of her being, albeit her positionality that still does not give her space to do so. The Black community as a whole has been in the process of re-memberance since the colonial encounter when it lost a lot of itself to the savage nature of conquest and repression. At the time, any performance or practice of African culture was not only frowned upon but also banned in many places, in favour of western expressions of ‘civility’. Black Twitter as counterspace to mainstream forms of expression is one of the places where blackness plays itself out organically with little to no interruption. Black Twitter is not only a space suited and used for cyber or hashtag activism, the platform is also useful for amplifying the Black voice in its long-standing mission to re-discover itself. Black Twitter and other social media platforms remove the intermediary in the self- presentation of Black intellectuals who can post their thoughts directly from their accounts to their supporters.

Black intellectuals no longer need mainstream media outlets to relay their opinions and they are able to react in real time whenever there is something that needs their attention. Almost as if there is a stark realisation that blackness is the constantly observed and misrepresented ‘Other’, blackness formulates new conversations for, about and on behalf of itself daily on the Twitter platform. The Black voice is no longer in jeopardy; it centres itself in its own agenda (Cyril, 2014). Added to this argument is the call for blackness to re-establish itself on its own terms, to decide how its’ henceforth should look and how it should function in the neo-colonial world (Cyril, 2014).

Public intellectuals are an important part of the reconstruction that I call here the “co-construction” or “co-creation” of blackness. This process needs to be undertaken with the community at large leading the cause, and intellectuals in the arts, activism, university and literature helping the process along and recording history in the making. Black Twitter has facilitated an organic ‘meeting of hearts’ for Black people all over the world, with the intellectual class leading the charge. There is more demonstration of solidarity on Black Twitter currently than has been seen in decades. Solidarity is shown through the sharing of different but familiar experiences of blackness and new identities being created in the community. In most instances these conversations and thereby co-constructions are facilitated and started by young Black intellectuals who use the platform to question the place of the Black in the global neo-colonial order. These intellectuals in community with blacks the world over have begun the process of mending and healing the colonial wounds that cause much destruction in Black communities. Black Twitter, with all its flaws does do commendable work in cushioning Black people from incidents of racism.

4.6 Black Twitter and anti-Black racism

In this section I deal with the ways in which Black Twitter comes to the question of racism, how those on the platform view racism and how racist incidents are dealt with. I first historicise racism and its impact on those who suffer under its thumb and then, linking the section above; explain how Black Twitter is not a racist platform. This section deals with racism as an oppressive system of physical, psychological, socio-economic and emotional exploitation. I situate racism here not as an attitude harboured by whites towards Black people but a systematic and systemic condition that dictates policy and seeps into human relations. This system is one that is strategically made to benefit the white at the expense of the so called “non-white” while at the same time blaming it victims for their inability to thrive within it.

Racism is a white invention, sustained and maintained by the white people for their own material benefit. In addition to creating the “other”, white racism also problematises the other in order to validate dispossession, exploitation, occupation and rape. Whiteness is able to thrive in the anti-Black world because of the problematisation. I suppose one must attempt an answer at whether or not there is in

fact a Black problem, or a problem with blacks? The entire colonial expansion and its subsequent slaughter of Black people is set up on the logic of blacks being a problem that needed to be dealt with. It was widely propagated that due to their "inferior humanity", which was a problem, they in turn were also a problem. It was then believed that killing, dispossessing, raping, oppressing and imprisoning them was a necessary evil needed not to only civilise blacks but also for world progress. Cesaire (1972) of course vehemently disputes the claim that the colonial expansion was a civilising or modernising mission, noting that Europeans in fact dehumanised highly civilised and progressive peoples in the global south. He asserts that colonisation viciously interrupted a majestic history in the making, which sadly cannot be redone or re-membered. He adds that European colonialists had to problematise unproblematic people in order to justify their slaughter of natives all over the world and they should not be given the leeway to justify their actions (Cesaire, 1972). Perhaps blacks will never not be a problem in the global colonial order that needs their cheap slave labour to keep capitalism going. Perhaps that is so, my hope is not to "touch the other" as Fanon ([1952] 2008) cries. My hope here is to instead touch the Black herself and unburden her mind of the strange feeling of being a problem which once achieved will set decolonial healing in motion. The Black invokes feelings in the other, feelings of hate, fear, curiosity, wonder and on rare occasions feelings of compassion. The other is said to have unspoken questions for the black, question that reside in the eyes but never on the lips. The other wonders how it feels to be problem, the Black is aware that this is a strange unexplainable feeling that one can only understand if experienced.

The black, although knowing no other reality, is fully aware of how strange it is to be in this body (Du Bois, 1994). The Black experience is particular and only understood by those in melanated bodies, one cannot simply put it in words. Fanon ([1961] 1990) explains that the settler "paints the native as a sort of quintessence of evil", not only as one who lacks values but one who negates values in totality. The native is a shell of cannibalism, criminality, genitals and primitivity. The settler positions the native as the enemy of all known "human values" and thereby as absolute evil. In so doing, the settler sets in motion conditions in native dwellings that prove exactly this point. The settler during colonisation, and with current coloniality, propagates the native as the destroyer of all that is good and beautiful about the world.

The native/Black must be allowed the bare minimum for; he deforms everything that comes near him that is of any beauty and morality. Having been propped up by Christianity, settler colonialism and coloniality then find a gateway to question the native's humanity out rightly positioning him as unethical, immoral, backward and destructive. Historically, once these floodgates were open, the exploitation, genocide and rape of natives was basically declared a moral act, for one with no human soul would not be accounted for in front of 'God' (Fanon [1961] 1990). Coloniality bastardised the native's codes of ethics, values, morals, forms of spirituality and 'God' in order to propagate the native's supposed lack of true humanity. Besides hypersexualising the native, the settler then animalised the native, describing him in zoological terms in order to cement his dehumanisation process. Ensuring that any savage act, the settler will inflict on the native is easily understood as emanating from the native's own actions or lack thereof. Therein begins the 'Black problem' (Fanon [1961] 1990). On the natives land of birth, the settler uses said native to build himself 'towns made of stone and steel', with beautifully paved streets and tall walls to hide himself, he demarcates all the best parts of the native's birth home for himself and this included vast oceans, towering mountains and hills, all the fertile land and streams of sweet waters. He banishes the native to the 'reservation/concentration camps' to live and die there, confronted with poverty and early death. The reservation is not desirable; it is filthy and dangerous, even for the native. But see, this is strategic on the part of the settler, for he sets up the very conditions that produce the evil that he claims the native to be. The settler produces the native, the settler sets up the evil; the settler then identifies this evil and therefore the settler deliberately creates the 'Black problem'.

Du Bois (1994) asserts, on the same vein, that the European's contact with the global south has resulted in a period in human history not likely to be forgotten, "war, murder, slavery, extermination, and debauchery". South Africa is then formed on the back of this very recent history, where blacks until two decades ago were living under formalised oppression, exploitation, segregation and outright savagery. Lever (1981) notes that, the establishment of the apartheid state, together with strengthening 'Afrikaaner' nationalism, was meant to solve the "Black problem". In order to keep whites safe from the evil products of their own savagery, apartheid was to ensure that

the numerically minor group could keep all its ill-gotten gains amassed together with the English during colonial-apartheid.

Whites were the principal participants and beneficiary of apartheid policies, as espoused by Hendrik Verwoerd who was a Sociology professor. The policy was built on and kept-up by the ‘swart gevaar’ (Black danger) narrative that was instilled in the white community who were made fearful of “equality” and competition with blacks for resources they felt were God-given to them alone. Verwoerd and his ilk regularly bemoaned the need for ‘Afrikaaners’ to stick together to keep political and economic power so as to prevent “majority rule” which would lead to blacks governing whites because whites would then be an oppressed minority. Apartheid then also, keeping to old colonial traditions, animalised Black people, claiming that should equality ever happen whites would be killed and cannibalised by Black people. This gave the apartheid government a moral obligation to commit all the atrocious acts against blacks. De Wet Nel (1957) in Lever (1981) is quoted to have said “were whites ever to lose control of ‘their’ economy by allowing it to pass into the hands of those unable to use power wisely, each and every person of every race would inevitably end up in penury, and many would starve”. The domination of the majority by the minority was justified and explained on this backdrop. Each time blacks would protest against apartheid laws and policies, they would only further prove their bestiality as seen in white society. Because as unoriginal as one could possibly be, apartheid, like colonisation before also animalised and hyper-sexualised blacks to prove their inability to lead. The settler creates the native, the settler creates ‘the Black problem’ once more; the settler creates evil once more on the native’s land. I awaken Biko (2004: 25) to answer the question of the Black problem, ‘there is nothing the matter with blacks. The problem is WHITE RACISM and it rests squarely on the laps of the white society’.

Needless to say, Black people have since earned a semblance of what used to be their birth home. They have attained a sham of a ‘democracy’ that is maintained with their blood, sweat, pain and tears. They can now vote and partake in some ‘civilised’ activities if they act right, read act white. Black Twitter deals with the remnants of this history daily, the arrogance of the settler-coloniser who feels no remorse for the wrongs of their forbearers. The dominant neo-colonial society discourages any form

of solidarity among the oppressed; it also refuses to acknowledge its entrenched anti-blackness and demands that the oppressed stop talking about it.

Any discussion on systematic oppression and how white society benefits from it is quickly labelled as ‘racist’ towards whites, an attempt to silence the oppressed. Black Twitter therefore is an anomaly; through this platform Black people openly have these discussions causing white society to call the platform racist. I posit here that, Black Twitter is not racist, but is a platform that arises out of racial necessity; much like Black solidarity. Black Twitter, like Black people cannot be racist because both lack the power and resources to impact the lives of whites in any material way. Black Twitter is the virtual representation of the manner in which oppression forces the oppressed to manufacture ways of resistance in efforts to relieve themselves of subjugation (Umoja, 1999). Racism has direct links to power because one needs power in order to enforce the depraved policies that is demanded by the internalised hatred of the ‘other’. Proof of this is seen when whites on the right and so called liberals demand that Black people provide ‘proof’ of the daily micro-aggressions and the violence of whiteness that they experience every day. Black Twitter is asked to justify its rage at the Black condition and sanctioned “pull your socks up and catch up with us already, it has been ten years”. One cannot measure the amount of damage such an insult causes to a healing victim when she is blamed for the crimes committed against her. One can visibly see the frustration in the participants on the platform, the inability to fathom the degree of callousness. Because Twitter is an open platform that is accessible to anyone, white twitter does occasionally venture into ‘Black speak’ in a usual attempt to silence, insult or minimise the experiences of others. White people and Black liberals alike jump on the platform to demand ‘Mandela’s rainbow nation’ out of Black Twitter.

Of course at this point Black Twitter is forced to defend its position and ‘teach’ those who clearly do not know, even if they are black. Black liberals are as dangerous as their white counterparts at derailing Black liberatory struggles. Because Black liberalism is an assimilation into Whiteness, Black liberals are forced to defend and side with whiteness in all manner of logic; even when detrimental to Black struggles. Because Black liberals are groomed under the logic of ‘white projection’ they parrot every word of this logic by claiming that racism is a human problem and not the white

problem that it is. These are the same people who seek the approval and inclusion of their white liberal friends in Black struggles in order to prove that they too are 'human-proper'.

I dare argue that white presence in struggles through which Black people demand the affirmation of their humanity, which was snatched away by colonial-apartheid, is patronising. As posited by Lever (1981), whites were the principal participants that kept apartheid alive through support and votes. White liberalism therefore is predicated upon the need to preserve the status quo of inequality while smiling, it is white liberals who keep white supremacy alive through the notion that they are 'good white people'. This forces Black people to focus on finding these good white people all the while oppression continues unabated. Biko (2004) forewarns us about white liberals who pretend to be 'down' with the struggle, who shout at the top of their voices that they have nothing to do with racism and the Black man's dehumanisation. He asserts that they in fact do not disagree with or denounce racism; they just want it to be less obvious and a little more 'humane' so they can be politically correct while benefitting from white privilege. Biko (2004) adds that white liberals claim that they feel as much oppression as blacks do, and this gives them free passage into Black struggles. They will even go as far as defining to blacks what they should fight for (Biko 2004). This describes liberal movements like #SaveSA perfectly, as a space created by white liberals pretending to care about Black struggles, on their own terms for their own agenda; that of proving that blacks can't govern themselves. This is evinced by the absence of white South Africans when Black people protest for the basic human rights that they have in abundance like water, shelter or security.

They in fact berate and belittle this fight as a further show of entitlement and bestiality on the part of blacks, almost as if they physically installed water themselves individually and not the apartheid government. When blacks request the same, they are "lazy and entitled". Whites know very well that blacks do not live as 'people', historically and presently, and to include them in movements like #SaveSA and #PeoplesMarch was a patronising slap in the face to a group of people who were useful for numbers at that time. Black Twitter reacted to this blatant abuse in uproar, highlighting the arguments made above. Many even questioned the absence of white allies during activities surrounding the Marikana massacre where 34 Black people

died; if they are really concerned about people. Through such displays, the Black voice is further diminished, the Black is spoken for, “determined without” (Fanon ([1952] 2008).

Those who are “human proper” and have a voice that matters, pretend to care about the conditions of the damned for a day and then go back to their palaces while the damned go back to their familiar conditions of perpetual war. The white society that created the Black through anecdotes and myths, wants to think, act and speak for the Black for he has not fully humanised yet. He can only be trusted with such a big task once he fully matures, read ‘whitens’. Black Twitter erupts in unison, demanding that the dignity of Black people must be respected, restored and recognised by the dominant minority. Dana is famously known to have had a heated twar (twitter war) with the Premier of the Western Cape, Mrs Helen Zille when Dana declared that Cape Town was the most racist city in the country. Ms Zille disputed this vehemently, telling Dana to provide ‘proof’ of the racism she claimed to have seen. Dana responded by asking her whether or not she was denying her claims *(Figure 4.1)*. This exchange ended in Zille telling Dana that she is a respected Black professional and she must not make herself a “professional black”. Nobody really knows what this term means but one can imagine that it was used to put Dana in her place, to silence her pain and dismiss her experiences. Needless to say, Dana has not relented in speaking out against racism.

Figure 4.1

Msimang *(Figure 4.2 to 4.12)* is more hopeful or naïve in her approach. She uses the concept of friendship as a lens as she asses a new way of achieving justice in South Africa. She argues that, because there can never be injustice between friends, then perhaps the goal for the country would be to establish and maintain friendships between Black and white people, this way both parties will work towards fair and equitable livelihood for the other. Msimang suggests that the burden of creating, forging and sustaining this friendship would be on white people, because of the power dynamics at play and the history of the two bodies involved. She also notes that the

failure of the forced rainbow nation must prompt us to seek deeper connections with the ‘other’, such as friendships; because these would be more genuine. She goes on to claim that white people have millions of ‘potential Black friends’. This approach is very innocent if not naïve, there is a long and painful history between the races such that equal, fair and true friendships are only rarely possible and cannot apply in broad situations. Msimang imagines the world anew and for this she must commended. In this world, the expression of pain, joy, or sorrow is allowed. However, the power dynamics she also notes are too skewed to be conducive for any true friendship t form.

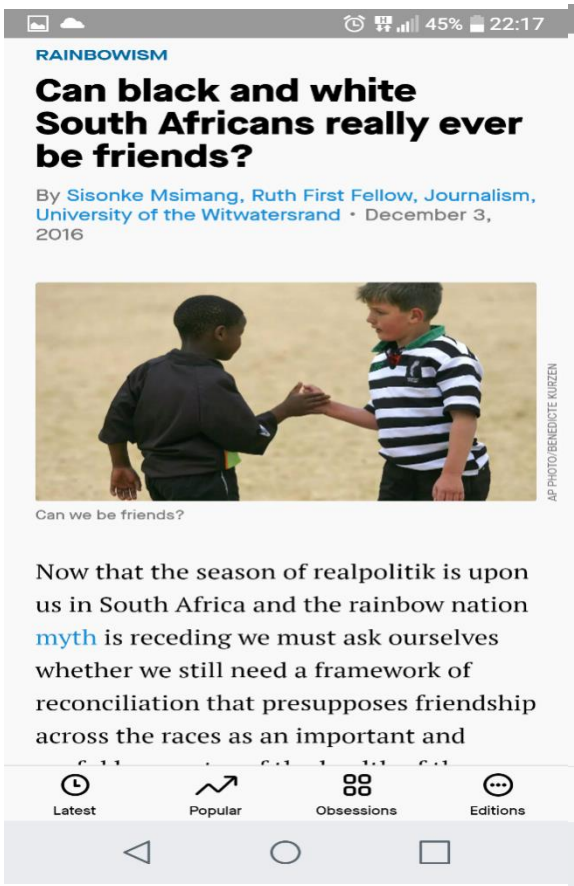
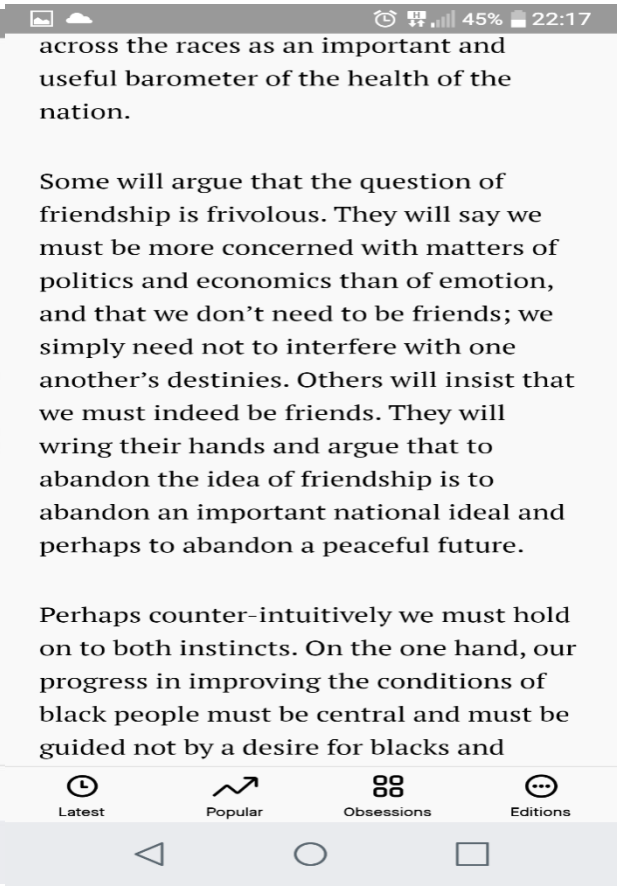


Figure 4.2



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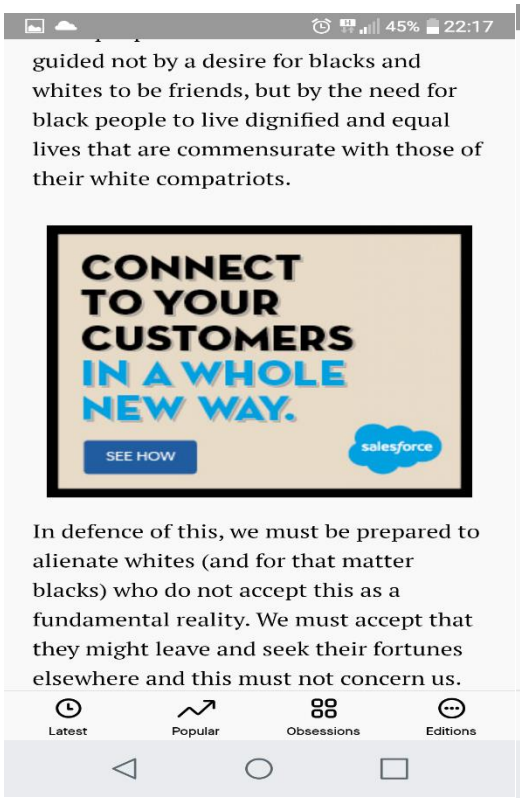

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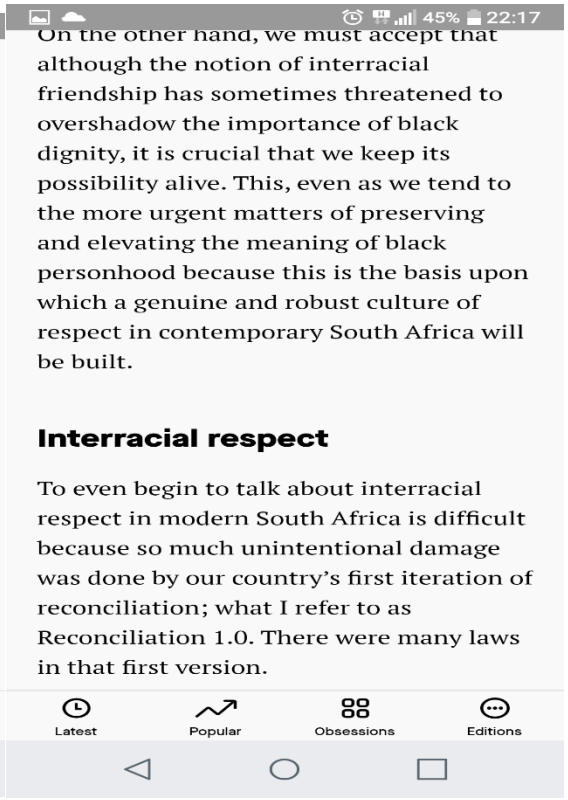

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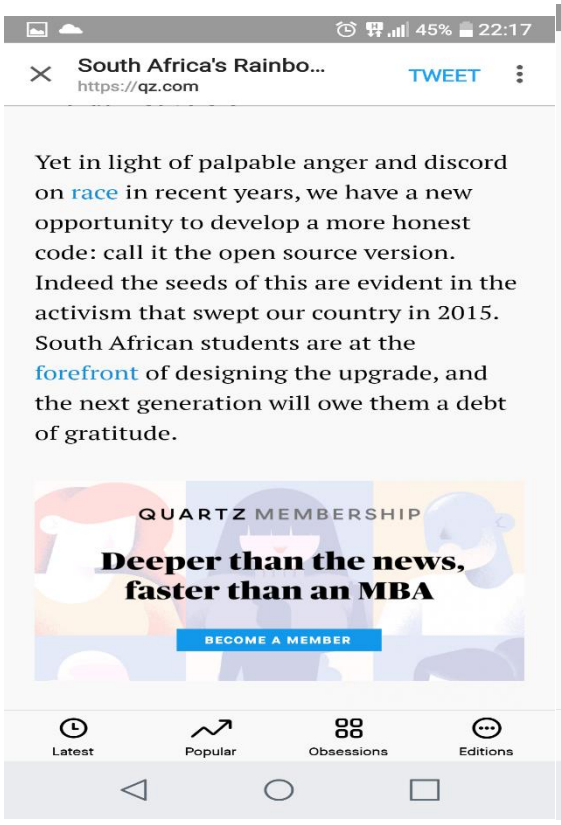

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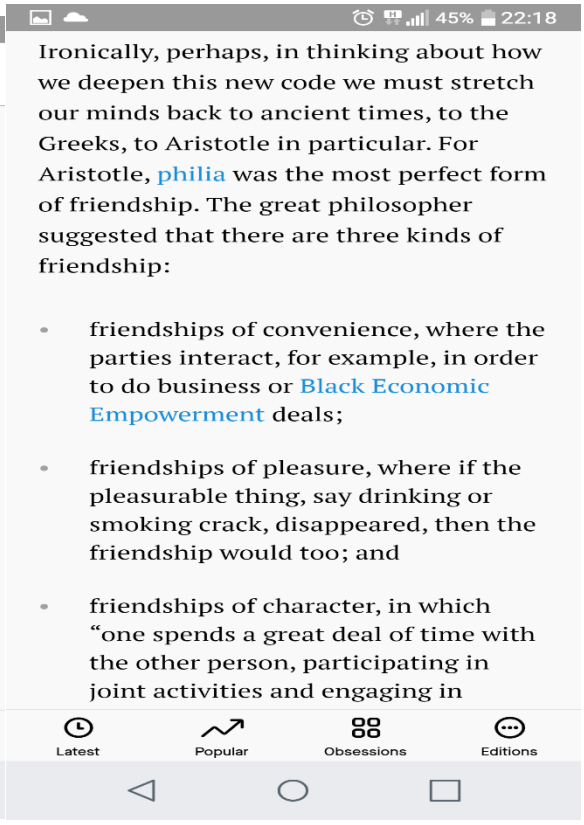

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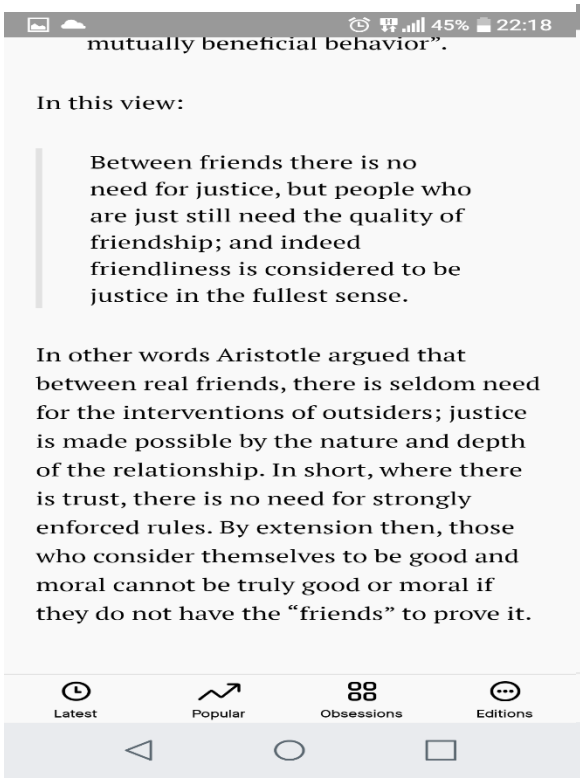

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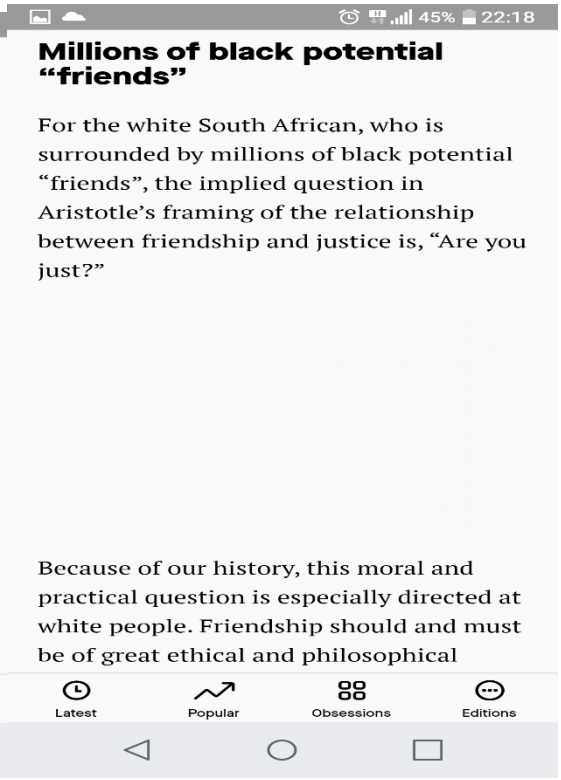

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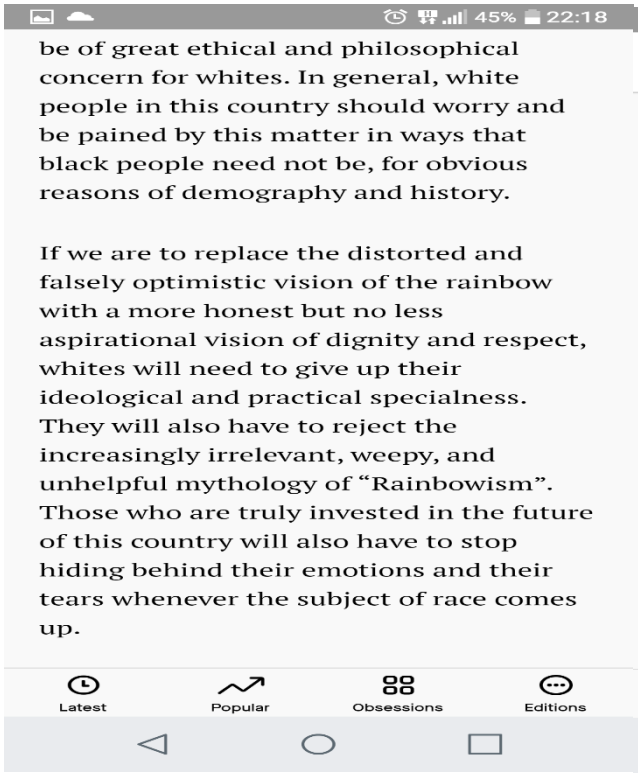

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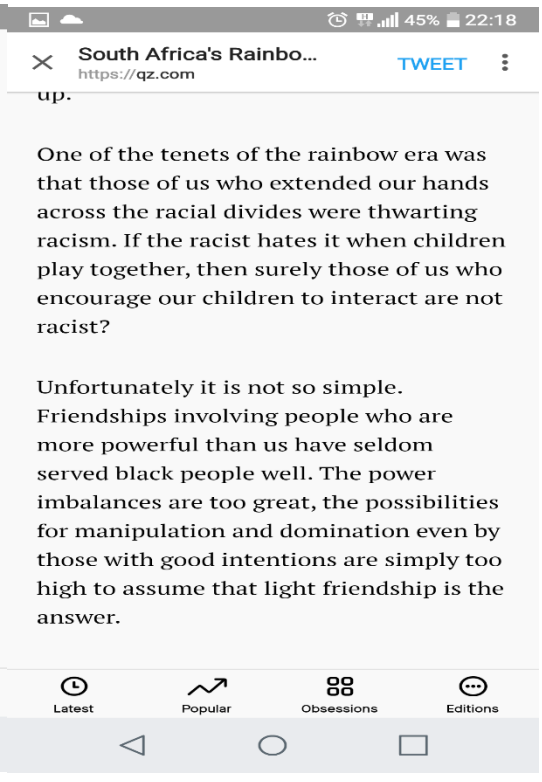

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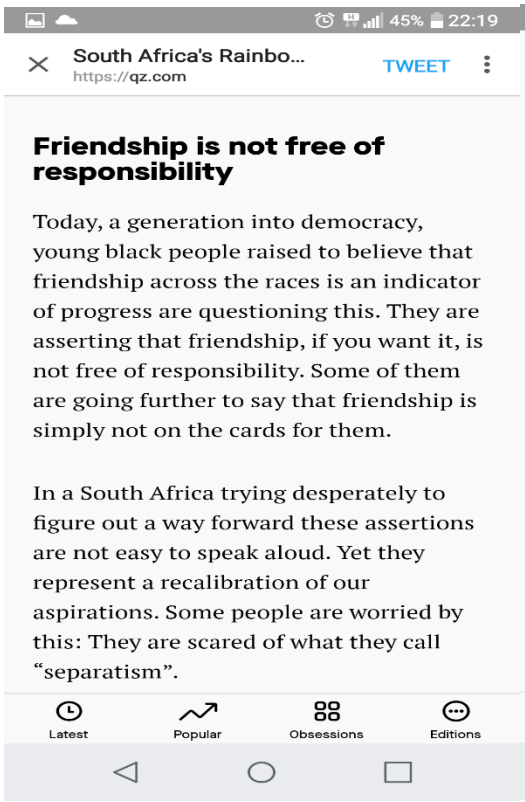


Figure 4.12

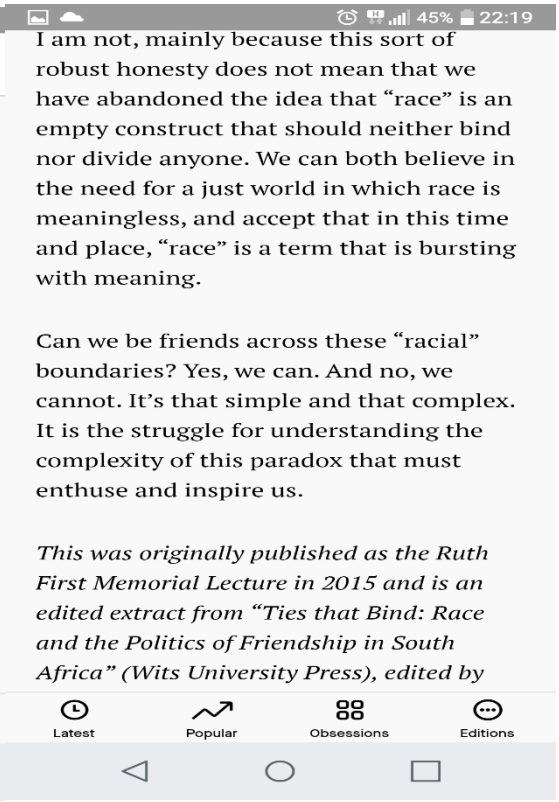


Figure 4.12

4.7 Black Twitter and the Impotent Black Rant

In this section, I advance the notion of the Black rant as demonstrated by the dealings of Black Twitter where racism is concerned. In the previous section I described racism as a systemic and systematic condition that oppresses others based on the colour of their skin. I vehemently argued that racism is not limited attitudes but is backed by power to turn those attitudes into policies and conditions that ensure other's disenfranchisement. This section then focuses on the manner Black Twitter deals with daily occurrence of micro-aggressions, hate or racist speech, and racist violence. I posit here that the Black rant is synonymous with a silent scream; it can be seen as a noise that is unorganised, lacks direction and is at its core thoughtless. The Black rant characterises the manner in which Black Twitter deals with racism. It is impotent because like its origin, it has not power or resources to influence lasting change, it is symptomatic and not strategic. Activism in all its varying forms makes up an important segment in Black people's struggle against institutional racism.

It is noteworthy that, for South Africa, having recently emerged out of centuries of formal colonialism because of activism in some form or another typically, activism is understood as a physical act in the form of protest directed towards a particular group of people or corporation. Linder, Riggles, Myers and Lacy (2016: 232) define activism as organising to transform systems of oppression for comprehensive social change this includes racial discrimination, immigration laws, sexual violence and other forms of oppression. Activism is largely linked to one's identity; it is this identity that jolts people into action to protest against injustice. For example, Black people are likely to protest against racial oppression since they experience it. It is also the LGBTQ community that protests against homophobia because it affects them directly (Linder et al, 2016). Essentially, Black and brown people have been fighting injustice for centuries, largely in the streets in active protest against oppressing groups.

Activism in physical form/protest has been a dangerous and painful process because settlers have spilled much Black blood callously in the process, so as the world becomes technological a lot of activism has moved to online platforms and social media. This section puts in perspective the potential and challenges of online and social media activism in general and Black Twitter in particular. Some scholars have dubbed online activism 'hashtag activism', 'cyberactivism', or 'twitter activism'. Linder et al (2016) posit that, social media has been a 'counterspace' for people of colour and those with minoritised identities to lodge their protest as 'traditional' forms of protest tend to have undesired consequences for them. This is to say, oppressed people constantly invent spaces for themselves where they communicate their pain to a world that does not want to listen. Black Twitter is undoubtedly the activist-protest space for blackness to militate against oppression, exploitation and racism. For example, in the case of #FeesMustFall and #RhodesMustFall, Black students in protest are perceived, positioned and treated as criminals who are trying to militarise otherwise peaceful, civilised white cubes, while their white counterparts are seen as having credible issues that need attention from society as whole. In this regard, Black people have moved some of their protest to online platforms that can at least protect their bodies. Cyberactivism is described as the "ways people use digital tools to effect social and political change" (Linder et al, 2016: 233).

This is however, not a new phenomenon, technologies have been used throughout the history of struggle to advance people's messages, the television, radio and newspapers were widely used during colonial-apartheid to keep the people involved in the struggle energised towards the fight. Activism that occurs on online or platforms other than physical protest tends to be discredited and not seen as 'real' activism, some have called it 'slacktivism' claiming that it is done by lazy people who do not want to leave their comfort zones to fight for change (Lindgren, 2013). Of course cyberactivism needs to be followed up by some form of physical action if it is to be effective, the online environment helps merely to spread the message and garner support for movements (Linder, 2016).

Activism is as old as oppression, platforms like twitter have completely changed the way activism is done, who can partake and even how it is defined (Wortham, 2016). Hashtag activism facilitates and links people's messages about a particular topic and so makes protest louder, wider, broader and more visible even though it occurs in a virtual space. One cannot not mention the #BlackLivesMatter movement that ensued in the USA after the shooting to death of Travon Martin and the acquittal of his alleged killer. It was as if blacks all over the world could feel the pain of blackness through the hashtag. The hashtag, which is still active, encompasses Black pain and the rebukes the cheapening of Black life everywhere in the world and not just America hence it has become such a unifying and relatable movement. Hashtag activism affords Black and brown people, and all oppressed communities what Yang (2016) calls 'narrative agency' where people of colour control their own narrative and can counter false narrative about themselves. Social media have also given space for blacks to protest using their culture as an antagonistic to the dominant 'white, western male' as the standard of civility. Black people have taken spaces like Twitter, that were initially designed to extend the "reception of western ideologies while diminishing the amount of participation to discuss them critically" and made them their own through unapologetic expressions of Black culture in all its forms.

At the moment, Black Twitter is the most dominant and popular voice on Twitter after having turned the platform into space to facilitate Black protest, perform Black culture for the Black community and affirm blackness (Brock, 2012) and (Yang, 2016). Black Twitter and its domination of hashtag trending topics encourages and facilitates Black

discourse uninhibited by time and space. Baban and Guzel (2015) argue that, there are three defining principles of any social movement, (1) common identity describes what the movement is and on behalf of whom does it speak, for example blacks speak on racial oppression for themselves and on behalf of others like them because oppression is their reality. (2) Anti-motion describes the enemy as defined by the movement so anti-Black racism and police brutality would fit under this subsection, while (3) social objective focuses on the social order or the form of social organisation that the collective movement wants to ensure.

The oppressed have been engaged in physical and virtual protests against a world that kills them, in favour of a world that allows all human beings to pursue a decent, just, prosperous life for themselves (Baban and Guzel, 2015). Scholars and activists alike are divided about the potential of cyberactivism, hashtag activism or twitter activism. The more optimistic claim that this form of activism has already and continues to subvert power structures in favour of the oppressed; they argue that online activism when coupled with physical forms of protest has the potential to change the world. The pessimistic argue that online activism is a pointless exercise that changes nothing, that it encourages "slacktivism" and 'clicktivism' where people believe that simply posting a status is enough to end oppression (Lindgren, 2013). Of course, both arguments are valid and can be backed up by good examples but one cannot underestimate the work of change that has been done through and the successes gained in online activism, particularly on Black Twitter. However, it is also vital that we examine Black Twitter objectively so as to improve its reach and influence. Black Twitter typically engages talks on racism in a reactionary, symptomatic fashion that is usually inspired by a particular event. One notes that, white person will call us monkeys or kaffirs (the incident), someone will share this incident on Black Twitter causing an uproar. The racist concerned will be found on other social media websites, place of employment contacted and media engaged. The racist will maybe lose their job or be fired from the family business. The employer will release a statement distancing themselves from the employee's attitude. Black Twitter is satisfied and all concerned move on. The story blows over in a day or two. One can clearly see that Black Twitter views racism as an event that occurs at one point or another, once quickly dealt with is solved and left alone. This platform relies on the uproar of millions of Black bodies that can cause a stir on the site once they engage something. This is

what I call the Black rant. For example, Black Twitter expressed disgust and discontentment when a white South African estate agent, who was angered by the presence of Black people at a Durban beach in 2016, called all blacks 'monkeys who should not be allowed out among people'. Black Twitter immediately took the case on, confronted her employer about how her views reflected those of the company and thereafter laying formal charges with the SA Human Rights Commission. The case of #PennySparrow unleashed many similar racist outbursts all over social media, which would have probably been concealed had it not been for interconnectivity of people today.

Figure 4.13 ***Figure 4.14***

Mazwai speaks out on racism constantly and her followers also prompt her to get involved in certain discussions by tagging her in them. In *(Figure 4.13)* above, Mazwai admonishes Black people who attended an event and 'clapped' for the last apartheid president FW de Klerk after a speech he delivered. In this speech de Klerk calls former president Zuma corrupt and congratulates the country for recalling him, Mazwai could not hold in her opinions, saying the former president of an oppressive regime should not even be given space to speak on governance or morality. In *(Figure 4.14)* Mazwai asserts, directed at Black people, that whites are a bigger problem than the Guptas. She says, the Guptas are not putting Black people in coffins; referencing the #CoffinAttack and they are not beating Black women; referencing the #KFCAttack. Mazwai gets a lot of backlash whenever she tweets like this, she speaks her truth regardless.

As far as the racist assaults/speech are concerned, the judicial system is based on laws that are colonial and anti-Black in nature, it was suspected that little or nothing of import would happen to #PennySparrow but a slap on the wrist because the law is built on the humiliation of blacks. #PennySparrow did lose her job, face public humiliation and outrage and was ordered to pay a fine. Black Twitter debated whether she must be made to do community service or visits in 'Black locations' to widen her understanding of her surroundings, it was decided that blacks should not be exposed to the indignity of her presence to add to salt to their wounds further and that people like her are beyond help.

A similar fate befell #ChrisHart, a well-known 'economist' at Standard Bank when he posted on twitter that two decades after democracy "blacks are still complaining and blaming apartheid" for their condition. Black Twitter took #ChrisHart and Standard Bank to task about this comment, and his lack of the formal qualifications that are required for a Black person to even be allowed through corporate doors. He was suspended and later resigned from the bank after it was clear that Black Twitter would not let the matter go unchecked. The bail of the white perpetrators of the #ColignyAttack against a young Black man left a small North West town ablaze in what looked like the ever feared 'race war'. Blacks were enraged at the sheer callousness of the magistrate who released the monsters back into society to await trial, while whites encircled and protected the criminals in a clear display of carelessness for Black life. This led to the burning of property, threats and protest. The case is ongoing. In a landmark protest, young Black #PretoriaGirls high school students took the issue of the criminalisation of Black hair to the streets after they were instructed to straighten their hair in order look "clean and tidy". The young girls brought Black Twitter to full defence mode when the protest for the recognition of their humanity trended. Education policies that were transferred from the apartheid regime without interrogation were questioned including policies that described Black hair as 'exotic, funky and street' while description attributed to white-looking hair were termed 'normal, tidy and clean'. Although this may seem like a minor grievance to others, the disregard of blackness in its natural form and its forced assimilation into whiteness that has of hyper-normative itself is a major and necessary struggle that goes beyond hair.

The young girls are forcing the South African government and the education department to look inward and acknowledge the coloniality of their policies. One can discuss many other movements that were facilitated and performed on Black Twitter, these are but a few. Black Twitter is a classic demonstration of 'protesting while black', the emotional labour that goes into it, the humiliation it usually causes and the hatred it summons (Lindgren, 2013). Black Twitter, it can be argued, only yields some influence because of the numbers of Black bodies behind movements, that a lone Black person attempting to solve a problem without the might of video recording, audio, screen-shots or links would get no joy.

Black Twitter therefore can also bring the stark realisation that Blackness is ever silent even at its loudest. Blackness is seen and heard only when it is absolutely unavoidable. In such cases then, a pseudo-action will be conjured up to silence the Black rant. The world only pretends to listen when hordes of Black bodies are collectively screaming over some injustice or the other. Corporate brands like Pepsi, Dove, MiWay, Standard Bank etc. are aware that they make a lot of money from Black people so their show 'solidarity' with them during racially charged incidents is not a moral matter but a financial one. There are countless cases of the dehumanisation of Black people by the same corporates as reported by Businesstech (2017), such as 'racial salaries' for their employees that go unnoticed because one Black person's claim to humanity is completely invisible and can only can some traction if supported by millions of others. Black Twitter experiences and perceives itself as powerful because participants think they have the attention of the powers that be, they do not realise that this attention is just a diversion strategy to silence them. Black Twitter is therefore an epitome of very loud but subsequently silent Black rants. White supremacist establishments in fact live off of Black suffering and unawares, Black Twitter proves to them that, they succeed daily in oppressing the racialised 'Others'. Corporations have in fact begun using Black Twitter for free advertising through strategic 'rage marketing', they carefully design an advertising campaign that they know will be offensive or racist; they share it knowing Black Twitter 'make it trend' by engaging, debating and being enraged by the piece. These can trend for days at a time.

At this point the corporation the issues an apology, igniting the trending again for a few more days while Black Twitter engages, debates and is angered by the apology. The corporation has thus received free online exposure for a product/service/campaign. Black Twitter lacks the ideological base that could fuel its activism, this manifest in the platform's inability to plan properly their activism, to archive their activities, to perform "post-mortem" of their activities so as to inform future activities. Black Twitter also lacks consistent, sharp and unwavering critique of anti-Black racism but is a reactionary machine that acts on minor symptomatic outbursts of racism; this will be discussed further in the following section. Lastly, Black Twitter is divided along lines of tribal, partisan, location, gender, sexuality, and class nature. Black Twitter does show a small level of solidarity but usually with some and not all Black struggles, based on issues of class, tribal differences and location.

4.6 Reconfiguring the Black Communication practice

In the previous section I examined Black Twitter and how it deals with anti-Black racism, I gave credit to the platform's participants for the gains they have accumulated and provided critique for the lack of strategy in these dealings. With that said, this section argues that there is a need to reconfigure the Black communication practice on Black Twitter in order to expand the impact of the platform. Firstly, there is a need for the establishment of a strategic Black radical critique on Black Twitter; especially when dealing with such complex matters as institutional racism. The reactionary mass of emotion does not allow the time and space to think things through, resulting in the impotent Black rant. When I speak of Black radical critique I mean a strategic, calculated and ideological way of understanding and dealing with racism; in order to leave a lasting trail of information even for activists to come. I am not victim-shaming here, I have acknowledged throughout this study that attempting to solve or protect oneself from racism is an emotionally draining task; I therefore understand the emotive nature of Black Twitter. What I am suggesting here is that since our emotions seem to fuel the racists, perhaps it is time to think of other ways of engagement.

The Black radical critique is the act analysing issues from the lens of blackness, it will be based in ideology, such as Black Consciousness and Black solidarity discussed above. This critique will be well thought-through, based in fact, strategic, unapologetic

in its activism, and radical. Instead of reacting to minor incidents of daily expressions of racism, the critique will use those minor incidents to educate the Black community about links of minor racism to the more powerful institutional oppression. As Black Twitter is the communication medium for black, these educative information sessions could carve space and time on the platform. This way, when companies deliberately bate Black people in their 'rage marketing' strategies; they know they will be met with a well-informed audience. I have explained above that anti-blackness is not an exclusively white trait; there is a need to deal with this scourge even within the community. Black Twitter, as it protects Black people from white racism, it must also protect us from Black anti-blackness. I argue here that xenophobia, afro-phobia, sexism, patriarchy, and blind Black liberalism are some of the issues that we need to deal with as a people. Black solidarity calls for unity among the oppressed; however this unity is not blind or automatic.

Those who harm the Black community should not be tolerated even if they are black. Black Twitter, at the moment is a space rife with Black anti-blackness disguised as 'saving the country' or preventing 'state capture'. The intellectuals on the platform should then lead the charge in thinking through the damage that is inflicted by this scourge. At the present moment, Black Twitter tends to resemble a clique, with certain individuals being exempted from challenge while others get scrutinised for every tweet. We can call this the 'twelebrity cult'. Once a member of Black Twitter is deemed 'intelligent', all intellectual engagement seems to skip them entirely. For example, when Dana and Mazwai tweet anything outside of their careers as artists; Black Twitter scrutinises or "drags" them. They get told to worry about music/poetry/performing and not concern themselves about politics of policy. On the other hand, Msimang seems to be allowed the space to engage in complex matter like politics without being told to "stay in her lane". Upon observation, those who have achieved 'tweleb' status do not get directly engaged on their tweets; users tend to speak in vague terms without mentioning them; such 'your favourite doctor said…', or 'your problematic favourite thinks…' This leaves these "problematic faves" unchecked to continue being problematic and harmful to the community. Black

Twitter, as posited above, is place of co-creation; blackness remaking itself in its own image. Therefore, those who derail this process should be brought to task even if they

are ‘faves’. Black people are rebuilding after centuries of destruction, Black Twitter provides the blocks that allow the community to imagine the world anew; it would behove us to protect this fragile process; from those within and without the community who seek to harm it. South Africa is a country that does not want to deal decisively with its race problem; it strives in sweeping this issue under the table of fancy vocabulary and slogans. Because of this, the understanding of how racism works is unknown, unclear and completely ignored in discourse. This lack of knowledge makes the oppressed uncertain about their own experiences with racism and racists on a daily basis.

Black Twitter needs to see racism for what it is, a system that oppresses, dispossesses, dehumanises and exploits Black people as a group; man, woman and child. Black Twitter will only then be able to hold those who not only enforce but also those who benefit from these levels of oppression accountable. Black Twitter should also facilitate accountability amongst the oppressed by discouraging problematic behaviours towards one another. One should be aware that they will be shunned, excluded or expelled from the platform if they harm the community and its members. Black Twitter does indeed offer great potential for the activities of the oppressed, but it needs a more refined strategy, based in clear collaborative ideology, unapologetic in its stance and calculating in how it deals with issues.

4.8 Conclusion

In this chapter I have examined Black Twitter as the communicative space in which blackness affirms itself without seeking recognition or assimilation. I have also situated Black solidarity as the concept that should drive all the communicative activities of blackness on this platform. I have highlighted the discursive limits of Black Twitter by claiming that a deep seated critique is necessary so as to strengthen the platform and improve its possibilities. I have lauded the platform for some of its success although not as effective as they potentially can be. I have addressed the need to reshape, remake and reconfigure the Black Communicative practice within Black Twitter fuelled by the unapologetic ideology of Black solidarity. I call for the platform to be a thinking, strategising and combative space for blackness, speaking black, affirming blackness and fighting for blackness. I have not shied away from asserting that the world in this

current state is organised along very thick lines of anti-blackness which have been socialised into white society as normal and imposed into Black society as a means of survival. Fanon ([1952] 2008) teaches us that, many see the need to denegrify blackness in order to be acceptable not only to the oppressing society but to blackness itself.

I have shown here that Blacks the world over have turned Black Twitter into a communicative space for themselves, they collectively communicate and perform Black culture in ways never seen before. However, this communicative space lacks a grounding ideology and this is what I argue needs to be critiqued here. Anti-blackness is a systematic, systemic and perpetual organisation that seeks to oppress blackness at all levels of society, if blackness is to fight back it has to have a collective ideology that underlies its fight. Black solidarity. The Black communicative practice that occurs on Black Twitter needs to be embedded in Black solidarity if Black emancipation is to ever see the light of day. I provided critique on Black Twitter as a Black rant, a silent scream that emerges in reaction to racist incidents but possesses no power to truly make a considerable difference. I add that this power can be achieved if participants give themselves time to think, learn, and strategise before implementing any protest. Black Twitter also needs to deal with Black anti-blackness that manifests as xenophobia, homophobia, afro-phobia, sexism, Black liberalism and patriarchy. Without dealing with problematic individuals in the community, Black Twitter is unlikely to succeed elsewhere. Black Twitter needs to unlearn centuries on that manifest in ways that oppress those of the community who are ultra-subalternised by being gendered

CHAPTER 5: AIN'T I A BLACK WOMAN?

5.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the Black woman as a speaking entity in the context of Black Twitter. Firstly, I position the Black woman; the ultra-subalternised being as one who has historically engaged in protest to protect and restore her dignity. I root this chapter in Spivak's (2010) meditations, 'can the subaltern speak?' The question of speaking for me also accounts for their efforts at activism in the face of oppression. I then examine the various forms of activism that owe their existence to the struggles of Black women. I examine the feminism and posit that the movement which later became the pinnacle of white women's issues is in fact, at inspection Black women's creation. I explain in detail the ways in which this movement does not serve the needs of the Black woman whose oppression is different to the white woman's. Thirdly, I look into Black feminism as an attempt to locate the true struggles of the Black woman, historically and currently. I take the position that much like feminism in general, Black feminism skirts around issues that affect women of colour. I then make an effort to locate the Black woman in African feminism and Africana womanism, arguing that Black women need to create movements that account for their oppression in all its various forms. I pose the question; can there be sisterhood between the white woman who is master and the Black woman who is her slave?

This chapter asks the fundamental questions, 'can she who has been outside of the human realm really speak'? 'Where does she speak from'? 'Who is she speaking to'? 'What is she speaking about'? 'Is there an audience for her words'? I position Black Twitter as a site of struggle for Black emancipation but is the Black woman truly speaking on the platform. I posit here that she is speaking but she does not have an audience. The movements discussed here, I argue, are attempts at speaking and seeking an audience. Lastly, I posit that the Black woman is the foundation, the inspiration and the life-blood of the white woman's own struggle because she never timidly accepted her subjugation and has been fighting since time immemorial. I argue here that the Black woman's struggle cannot be divorced from that of the Black man, child or LGBTI+ community. My position is for the combination of these struggles so that all Black beings can be saved simultaneously and held responsible when they let the community down.

5.2 Can the Black Woman Speak?

When defining the term ‘subaltern’, Spivak (2010) asserts that, it should not be conceived as a fancy word to describe the ‘oppressed’. There are many groups of oppressed people that cannot use the vocabulary of subalterniety as it does not apply to them. Groups that are denied a piece of the capitalist pie, for example white women, the white working class, and the white poor cannot claim a subaltern positionality as they derive some benefits from the very systems they feel oppressed by. Spivak (2010) defines the subaltern as those who are oppressed/marginalised/dehumanised based on their race. She makes an example of how western scholars relegate scholars from the global south to the margins of ‘knowing’, that their knowledge is not knowledge unless it is white-adjacent. Spivak (2010) asserts that this is a form of silencing those who are seen as less human, less deserving of an ear, less knowledgeable, and less worthy. The subaltern therefore, are prevented from speaking and ignored when they do. The question of whether or not the Black woman can speak is without doubt an important one.

The question therefore begs, can the Black woman speak? I will save the reader the expense and simply answer: No! The argument I seek to make here is that the Black woman cannot speak because she is perpetually spoken for by the ‘other’. The Black woman, based on the historicised positionality of her body is the ever invisible presence even in her own struggles. Because of such an invisible presence, Black women have always been spoken for. In this section, I will evaluate who often speak for Black women, what is said (ideology of content) and with what consequences. It will be essential to note my underlying critique as I argue that Black women are able to speak for themselves while outlining some of the conditions that must be present for them to be able to do so.

At the height of struggles for emancipation, the Black woman tends to be forced to the background. This could stem from the inferior positioning of the Black woman in society. The Black woman has tended to be represented by the Black man in struggle and although this can be problematic at times I can accept it on the grounds that these two entities are fighting the same enemy. At this point, I want to speak to the form of representation of the Black woman’s struggle that I disagree, that of “white liberals”

whether male or female. The presence of white liberals in the struggles of Black people by nature is problematic, especially where Black woman are the subject. Biko (2004: 21) captures the, “do-gooder” sentiments of white liberals perfectly when he asserts that, they centre themselves in the struggles they could not possibly know anything about and thereby syphon all due attention from those who actually need it. Biko (2004: 21) expresses the self-centredness and insincerity of white liberals who attempt to distance themselves from the systems that oppress Black people, women in particular by pointing to the fact that, “they are not responsible for white racism and the results of the global system that benefits them directly”. They also strongly believe they have every right to be in ‘Black spaces’ and take part in Black struggles solely because they “feel oppression as acutely as Blacks”.

Never mind that these are the same women who receive, spend, or inherit their father’s and husband’s estates in the form of land and money. They are the same women who live off the meagrely paid labour of Black women when Black women raise their children and keep their houses clean for them. The Black woman cannot speak because she is perpetually spoken for by others. The trend lately is white feminists perceiving themselves as speaking for all women and therefore silencing the real and particular concerns of women of colour, I will however discuss this further below. The problem of the centralised white liberal is that she thinks she can articulate better what the Black woman wants; she believes she knows the needs, wants and aspirations of the Black woman. She claims that because she as an ally who is similarly ‘oppressed’ by masculinity but at the same time has the benefit of the Master’s ear and language, she can shape the ideas of the Black woman so that they are more palatable for presentation.

Biko (2004) proved that, decades of believing in ‘allies; yielded nothing for the Black struggle during the tumultuous years of apartheid. I therefore connote that, should Black women centre their liberal allies in their struggles; by the time they realise, their messages will have completely changed, they will no longer recognise their own struggle and they will have been confused and derailed totally. They will have been prevented from ‘speaking’, silenced and spoken for. This silencing at the point of contact with white liberals roots itself on the question of humanity proper, the white liberal, commands an audience when she speaks because she is the epitome of

humanity. The white woman therefore uses this visibility to render the Black woman invisible in her own struggle, to render her silent in her own protest. DiAngelo (2015) chastised white women for the brand of violence they bring with them in moments of struggle. I want to tie her argument to Biko's earlier assertion although she approaches it differently. She argues that 'well-meaning' white liberals seldom open themselves up to listen to the pain of others, she posits that white men tend to want to gain control of the conversation by defending, deflecting, and offering simplistic 'solutions' to racism such as 'if we all just stopped talking about it'. DiAngelo (2015) appropriately expressed disapproval at white women who shift focus from real victims through displays of 'white tears' and 'white fragility' by actually crying whenever the oppression of Black people is discussed. This on its own is violence due to the social mileage of white women's tears and the millions of Black men who have been murdered, lynched, castrated or jailed at the first sign of a distressed white woman.

Not only that, these tears are but a public display as the performer knows very well that her crying changes nothing in the lived experiences of Black people. These tears, which can be translated to the presence of white women in Black people's struggle, whether intended or not, shift all attention from issues of real concern and make this performance (white tears) the core issue of discussion. This is to say, instead of focusing on their own pain and because of the white woman's social range; everyone shifts focus to her and whether or not she is ok? DiAngelo (2015) asserts that, these tears should never be perceived as solidarity because they are not. They are shallow expressions of white guilt and therefore they are self-indulgent and self-centred. These tears are silencing techniques that prey of the Black woman's compassion and lead to the complete ignorance of her issues.

The ability to speak touches fundamentally on the question of humanity and the imposed hierarchies thereof. Black people in general and women in particular experience life not as fully human, due to the structural conditions that have been laid to ensure that they don't. Not only was the Black woman written into history as the reason her race is devalued, she was positioned as the height of savagery, bestiality and primitivity. What this positionality has achieved is ignorance towards the Black woman's pain and suffering; no matter who imposes it. In the contemporary, the Black woman has not had her full humanity restored in that the world has not atoned for all

its mistreatment of her; she is still the least prosperous of humanity thereby cementing that she is still at the bottom of the food chain. In this way, she remains in subhuman conditions forced to further denigrate herself in a racist-sexist system in order to survive. I am not one who separates the struggles of the Black woman from those of the Black man. I believe they are fundamentally linked and that if we pursue the current route of separate development we will run into trouble at a later stage. Of course I want to express that the Black man can and does neglect the humanity of Black woman like his white counterpart, but there are reasons that are usually left out of literature for this.

As articulated by Maldonado-Torres (2016), the Black man's inferior position in the work place and outside of the home where he is faced with racist white men spills over to cause problems in the Black family. When studying matters such domestic abuse, gender roles, sexism in Black struggles, patriarchy, broken Black families and absent fathers/partners, researchers neglect this important aspect of the relationship between Black men and women. The loss of power that the Black man faces in society leads to the oppression of the Black woman in the home, for any human who has been reared in an oppressive society will seek someone to oppress in order to fill a void. The Black man wants to occupy the seat of the master because the master has positioned himself as the ultimate human (Maldonado-Torres, 2016). This can be clearly seen in the "Black reservation" called townships, the levels of violence, domestic disputes, murder, femicide, and abuse; all can attributed to the frustration of subdued socio-economic mobility. Once a man is unable to be a provider like society teaches him he needs to be, he gets frustrated and acts out in violent ways towards who are closest to him.

I will expand on this argument in sections below. I assert here that, when we seek the voice of the subaltern in matters of importance, we forget the ultra-subalternised Black woman who is an oppressed group within an oppressed group. This means, as the western world recognise the white man's voice as representative of the white woman's needs; so does it regard Black struggles. The Black woman therefore, cannot possibly speak in world that does not even recognise her humanity. Instead the world positions the subaltern Black woman as the 'Other' who needs to be developed. This implies that, she does not know what is good for her, she cannot reason and if so then she

cannot be trusted to make decisions for herself. She must be 'developed'. The question then is, if the subaltern cannot speak, what more of the gendered subaltern? Spivak (2010: 63) asserts that, the subaltern as female cannot be heard or read, she cannot speak. Of course Spivak (2010: 64) acknowledges what we know already, that the subaltern female, the Black woman has been speaking by "turning her body into text of woman/writing" but the anti-Black world does not receive her messages. I have contextualised this asserting below by historicising the manner in which the Black woman is the blue-print of all women's struggles from feminism to womanism etc. Subaltern females have been attempting to speak, however the act of speaking as Spivak (2010: 64) posits "entails a distanced decipherment by another".

Without this decipherment, this sharing and discovery of meaning we cannot claim that speaking has really occurred. Therefore, even the Black woman screams in her loudest voice, the world does not hear her because it has already made up its mind about her. hooks (1981: 51) attributes this to the devaluation of Black womanhood that bases itself in the history of the "making of the Black woman". She asserts that, enslaver and colonist used sexual exploitation as a means of silencing the Black woman, as a means of subjugating, ridiculing and threatening Black womanhood. In his master trickery, the enslaver/colonist then turned around and blamed the Black woman for her own rape. These experiences leave a Black woman, who is powerless to counter the anecdotes of the enslaver, in complete and utter silence. Unable to defend her own virtue, thereby confirming the enslaver's assertions that her whole race of women is beastly and 'un-rapeable', she is promiscuous and un-deserving of defence because she asks for it, she is unworthy.

The enslaver has proven master of deflection; he forces himself onto Black women and then juxtaposes them to white women, whom he claims are the height of purity compared to sexually savage Negro women. The enslaver/coloniser makes Black women accomplices to their own rape, if not initiators of the sexual act (hooks 1981). In this regard, the white man eternally silences the Black woman for she does not want to relive the pain of her sexual assault and she is painfully aware that no matter how loud she screams, she will not be heard. Spivak (2010) also painfully noted the invisibility/transparency of the subaltern Black female; she is a presence that is absent or as Smit (1994: 194) stated of "nowhereness and everywhereness". Jordan-Zachery

(2007) made a similar assertion, arguing that, social constructions of Black women of Black women make them invisible and hypervisible to members of their in-group as well those of the outgroup. Black women are invisible because they belong to a race that is invisibilised and so they suffer the same fate. Further, the Black woman is invisibilised within her community through the use of culture and customs that render her a second class citizen. I would expand and claim that the Black represents a “silent blood-curdling scream”. In case the reader wonders, I still maintain that the Black woman cannot speak and I have provided some evidence to this effect. I want to posit at this point that the Black woman cannot speak because she has been positioned as a problem. Although Du Bois (1994) speaks in non-gendered terms when he addresses the problem of being Black in the world, I find it pertinent that we focus our discussion on how the Black came to be a problem through the devaluation, destruction, and exploitation of his nurturer. Du Bois (1994) noted that, it is a peculiar experience, a feeling that sends one questioning themselves in perpetuity. Being a problem in the world leaves a psychological residue that validates and renders fair all mistreatment in one’s mind.

The Black woman has been made a problem therefore she deserves everything that happens to her. Arguably, because the Black woman is a problem the dignity/humanity of her race is then called into question, the value of the continent that she calls home is then raped and pillaged for it also has no value. Coly (2010: 653) acknowledges that the dignity of the continent will be gained through the dignity of its women, further proving the trick of devaluing Black womanhood in order to devalue a whole people. Coly (2010: 653) posits that, Africa has been on a mission of enrobing the continent in its former glory though various means, since it was disrobed by the colonial encounter. She observes the pattern of photography on the content and notes that the Black female body is pictured fully robed in the contemporary; she attributes this to efforts to re-dignify the continent and its people.

Coly (2010) further notes the manner in which the Black woman’s body was used as proof of African primitivity, and by extension, evidence of the need to colonise and ‘civilise’ Africans. The Black woman and her womanhood were laid bare by the coloniser to prove that such savage, promiscuous and sexually depraved women could not possibly raise a civilised nation. The Black woman of course has not been

lifted of this colonial burden, largely because the conditions that emanate from its creation still persist today. The Black woman has not been allowed to meet her humanity as yet, in order to do so the white world has to admit its wrongs towards her and since it will not, she will not likely heal soon. She is a problem and by extension, the Black is a problem. The burden of the Black problem rests on the shoulders of the Black woman to this day, she has no relief instead the white woman is affirmed of her purity, goodness, innocence, chastity and perfection through the Black woman's physical and emotional labour. Wekker (2016) shows us the ways in which the purity of whiteness is validated by 'savagery' of blackness. So is the white woman's 'goodness' validated by the Black woman's 'bestiality'. The white woman may be allowed limited opportunity and kept to domestic spaces but at least she is not the Black woman, being a Black woman is understood as a positionality of death, of nothingness.

The Black woman assures her white counterpart that her world could be worse simply by existing. In this instance, the Black woman cannot speak; when she opens her body to speak instead she speaks instead for the white woman. When she expresses the pain of her body, she confirms for the white woman that she is valuable. When she struggles for emancipation, the white woman models her own struggle after her for the worst position to be is below the Black woman. At this juncture I'd like to invoke the work of Wekker (2016) where she reports a strange psycho-medical case in 19th century Dutch society. In this fairly well-off, homogeneous and white society, three upper classes consulted a doctor having diagnosed themselves with a condition the called 'Hottentot nymphaea', a term used to refer to the supposed morphology of Black women's genitalia.

The three women claimed that, they had 'overdeveloped labia minora', a condition characterised by protruding labia minora which was said to be common in Black women. These women claimed that this condition caused them to have 'strange' sexual urges, they described as 'aggressive, un-lady-like, primitive' sexual desires as in the case of prostitutes or lesbians that they immediately racialized and associated with the Black woman away from themselves. These women in Dutch society at the time, found it impossible to speak frankly about their hyperactive sexuality, because that would render among the lowest of the low in society and thus they displace their

feelings onto the Black woman. Fully aware that the white woman had to maintain a veil of innocence, chastity and purity the imagery of the savage Black woman whose sexual activity was “immature, inappropriate, aggressive, and masculine” was created so to explain any sexual urges deemed unusual in white women. They could explain themselves away in racialised terms that shifted what they perceived as the blame onto Black women even though they had never physically seen the Black woman’s genetalia. The above assertion brings out the fact that, the Black woman is dissected, pulled apart and skinned so as to cover the white woman’s ‘shortcomings’. Because she is proof of the civility of the white woman, when she appears she does so for the white woman and not for herself. Alcoff (1991: 9) posits that, “when whiteness speaks for the disempowered native, it strips the native naked and leaves her voiceless on the other side of the fence to be engaged only when invited by the all-knowing speaker”.

In this relationship, the native man or woman is spoken for, spoken about in place of speaking for themselves. The speaking I focus on here speaks volumes on the fact that in addition to being spoken for (by white liberals and Black men), even when the Black woman speaks her speech in fact “speaks” for others. This here is a reverse of Alcoff’s (1991) assertions because one would think that when the Black woman appears and seeks to have a voice she would then hinder the “other” from speaking for her. I prove here that in the world as we know it, there is no victory in sight for the Black woman until the world is made anew and Fanon’s (1963) world of ‘you’ is achieved. If anything is proven here at all, it is that the Black woman CANNOT speak. She wants to, she tries to, she does but her speech is silently drowned in liberal gibberish, the West’s development agenda, and the white woman’s mess. The Black woman then attempts to create her own safe spaces so she can address issues that are unique to her, she forms her own feminist spaces modelled after the struggles of those who came before her.

Figure 5.1

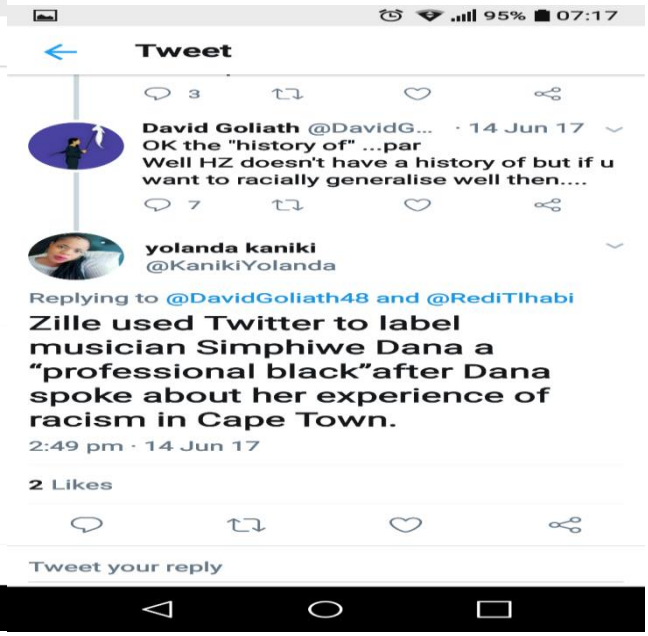


Figure 5.2

Dana was chosen for this study because she speaks so freely and constantly about the Black condition in her music, and through her activism and on Twitter. A few years ago she was engaged in a twar (twitter war) with Helen Zille over the premier's utterances in the media where she referred to people from the Eastern Cape living in Cape Town as 'refugees'. Zille in turn called Dana a 'professional black' and further requested that she provide proof of the racism she claimed existed in the so called mother city. This dismissal of Black women's experiences is not new; we are constantly called upon to provide tangible proof for our experiences, to show how the 'Other' is being anti-black. I call this the 'pornography of Black pain', much like poverty porn; its racist participants get a kick from the pain of Black people and constantly provoke it for their own end. The 'Other', she who has benefited from the oppression of Black people for centuries seeks to tell Black people what constitutes racism and what does not. This can only be described as the pathology of power. While fighting for her rights, the Black woman has inspired and created many vehicles of protest; with the most prominent being the feminist movement.

5.3 Black Feminism

As a follow up on the previous section, I put it to the reader to view the concept of feminism as a call for Black women to initiate, carry out and conclude activism from

where they are positioned. Black feminism in its purest form is a call to bring forth the subjugated knowledge of the Black woman's intellectual work. It focuses not only on the work performed by intellectuals who languish in traditional institutions of knowledge production and validation but also on the informal conversations through which Black women share knowledge that is relevant and specific to them in their lived experience. Black feminism argues for the centralisation of the Black woman's intellectual labour, artistic expression, political activism and "theories of the flesh" as stated by hooks (2009) in the Black struggle. The woman whose entire existence is characterised by notions of inability to theorise and intellectualise comes to the fore to claim her place in a space that rejects her.

Collins (2000: 5) noted that "although largely ignored and silenced, Black woman intellectuals have a vital analytical foundation for a distinctive standpoint on self, community and society and, in doing so, created a Black woman's intellectual tradition". In order to set context, one must mention that Black feminism emerges out of the African-American women's community as a theory of struggle and activism against oppressions suffered by African-American women. I will not go into descriptive analysis of the theory here but will rather look at it through lens of the communicative practice of a Black woman who screams from under the rubble to be seen and heard. This is to say, the literature used here will overlap and may be relatable to some and not to other women's context. Similarly to Black women everywhere, Collins (1990: 557) posits that "the coloured girl is not known, and hence not believed in; she belongs to a race that is best designated by the term 'problem', and she lives beneath the shadow of that problem which envelopes and obscures her".

By extension, if the Black woman is unknown, unheard and not believed in, so is any contribution she makes. Although for generations she has left a vast tradition of intellectual labour, she still goes unnoticed because her knowledge is deemed irrelevant. Black feminism then emerges to bring forth the forgotten, ignored and silenced intellectual, artistic and activist work of African-American women who have suffered triple forms of oppression in the deliberately instituted 'matrix of domination; namely, race, gender and class'. The intersections of race, gender and class result in more pronounced systems of oppression for Black women. The term 'intersectionality' was officially coined by Crenshaw (1989) to theorise on the functioning of race and

gender in the oppression that Black women suffered in society. At its foundation, this was an ideology of Black women theorising on their condition, although it is currently applied by many different groups to explain oppression in their communities. In analysing the matrix of domination, hooks (2009) posits that, the Black woman is buried under iron pots and pans and cannot seem to escape the domestic burden that holds her in poverty for generations on end. The Black woman constantly foregoes her dreams as economic and psycho-social conditions simply are not set up towards the achievement of those dreams. Instead she is encouraged to secure and support a more 'propertied' husband and the children she bares by him. This set up ensures that she never has any possessions of her own and is perpetually dependent on the 'man of the household' for provision and security.

This leads to paternalistic relations between Black men and women who in reality should be partners. This relationship can be attributed to the colonial-enslavement experience that enforced Eurocentric ways of being for the Black community in Africa and the diaspora (Collins, 1990). Black Feminist thought centres on Black women's experiences and thereby not only produces new knowledge but 'new ways of thinking about such knowledge'. It forces for new questions to be asked from new angles and therefore new conclusions to be arrived at. Collins (1990) also advocates for the collation of "race, class and gender" as interdependent systems of oppression and claims that focusing on one does little to alleviate the burden faced by the oppressed.

Collins (1990) further asserts that, Black feminist thought as a system of knowledge production and validation plays a big role in empowering the Black community as a whole, and Black women in particular. Collins (1990) noted that, the feminist movement has largely disregarded Black women's issues even though there are visible influences of earlier influences of Black women at the commencement of the movement. The feminist movement has been racist against women of colour and focuses its attention on white, middle class women and what they deem important. Collins (1990: 15) also argues that, "where Black woman movements are concerned, feminism is limiting as it pays more attention to intellectual activity that happens in traditional academic institutions by elite white women who have no real interest in anyone else's issues". This is to say, feminism is a movement of white-educated-middle class women who want a bigger seat at the master's table, it is not concerned

about the problems of women of colour or even poor white women. It also tends to happen in traditional institutions like universities, social clubs, and churches further entrenching the divide between ‘us and them’. This middle class and educated logic is unrealistic for Black women’s worldview and reality in which women’s leaders/intellectuals tend to be uneducated, sometimes illiterate leaders of the community. She then advocates for Black feminist thought that takes account of the particular experience of the Black woman. At this juncture I would like to begin a different line of thought, one that questions that centralisation of gender politics in Blacks struggles when all blackness, regardless of gender is a subhuman object who presents nothing but a problem in the world.

I have argued elsewhere that the Black in the anti-Black world represents a problem, whether in the body of a man, woman or child. The world is designed to exterminate us on sight. How best is it then to mount the fight for Black emancipation without leaving out the Black woman? Collins (1990) agrees that gender is but a social construction that has worked against the Black community and that it being legitimised only works against us, those who fall outside of its sensibilities. In this vein, the construction that is gender should be put to task, especially where Black people and their struggles are concerned. I view the centralisation of gender in Black feminism as a form of assimilation or hybridisation of Black struggles to look and sound like white women’s struggles.

My critique stems from the works of Oyewumi (1997) who asserts that, the application of a blanket gender normative to African women’s struggles is a derailing tactic because it assumes that gender was historically understood in the same way in the west and in Africa. She urges, the study of African women’s struggles at their own merit and not under the assumption organised women who are equal oppressed, or the assumption that Black women were oppressed in the same ways white women were. The problem of the Black is not her gender, but her humanity its entirety and until the problem of her humanity is solved the problems of her gender, class, and sexuality cannot be solved. Maldonado-Torres (2016: 15) rightly argues that, “conditions in Blackness are perpetual conditions of war in which normal rules are foregone entirely, by extension, gender binaries do not apply”. He asserts that, as Blacks are permanent subjects of coloniality living in the zone of non-being, conditions

that are normal and ordinary in war are therefore, acceptable in their societies. Maldonado-Torres (2016) posits that, when gender binaries and their characteristics are applied to those who occupy the zone of being-human, masculinity is positioned the highest form of being, activity, rationality, self-determination and femininity is seen as passivity, irrationality, and emotional. Of course these binaries apply only to the white race and cannot be understood in the same way where people of colour are concerned. He adds that in the bodies of the colonised, where masculinity or femininity is applied, they are equated and likened to animalistic manifestations of those characteristics. When femininity is conceived for the white woman, it is seen as an abused but also much protected zone of existence. White men are oppressive and abusive towards white women but they are also highly protective over them.

The Black woman therefore is never considered feminine enough for protection and exists in a space that is outside of and contrary to what femininity is seen as. This means that, whatever protection or safety is accorded to white women on the basis of being feminine, does not apply to Black women. Black men are not spared similar pathology; they too are outside masculinity as it is understood in relation to white men as theirs can be stripped away through violent sodomy, lynching and beatings. When masculine characteristics are perceived in Black men, assertiveness morphs into 'violence', anger into 'rage', adventure into 'irrationality' (Maldonado-Torres 2016: 16). This literature is included here to call for different ways of struggling and being, especially for those in the zone of non-being. Sojourner Truth, in her ground breaking 1851 speech at a women's rights convention perhaps puts the condition of the Black woman in better terms:

"That man over there says women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arms! I have ploughed, and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain't I woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man- when I could get it- and bear the lash as well! And ain't I woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seen them most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I woman"?

Truth (1851)

In this pioneering speech, Truth puts the culturally constructed concept of ‘woman’ to task and questions its applicability to the Black woman. The Black woman in fact ‘ain’t a woman’ in world as we have it, she ain’t even human to begin with. She is a non-human, sub-human when the world is generous and as she’s a second class citizen as her life has been characterised by hard labour with no help from the men who are meant to protect her. The question ‘ain’t I a woman’ brings about a new critique which questions the blanket application of the concept to all ‘women’ even though they occupy different positionalities in the world. Maldonado-Torres (2016) explains the impact of existing in the zone of non-being as one that does not afford Black people the liberty to seek assimilation into preconceived, constructed realities as theirs is an existence that is characterised by conditions of perpetual war. Attempting to look for enemies that are outside of the white-supremacist, neo-colonial establishment is a waste of time and much needed resources. When one observes the feminist movement in South Africa, it takes a lot after the African-American women’s Black Feminist thought regardless of the differences in context.

This movement has made a habit of demonising and making enemies of Black men without accounting for historical context. One is confronted by this logic of perpetuating the stereotype of the ‘dangerous Black man’ when observing the activities of this movement that are very contemporary in their dealings with Black men. For example, the beating of Black men with shamboks at the University of Witwatersrand at the height of the #FeesMustFall movement culminated in the #MenAreTrash movement. Both movements deal with the contemporary brokenness of the relationship between Black men and women and do not examine the history that brings us here at all.

Based on this logic, there is an inherent problem with the Black man; one is intrinsic in his make-up from inception. He is a problem that needs to be eliminated from society because nothing can be done to salvage him. My point here is that, the Black man is a product of his society, one that has brutalised, violated, and abused him for centuries and we should understand him from this point onwards. I do not seek to proclaim pure innocence in Black men or ignorance towards Black women’s pain. All I seek is to understand all Black people as people with problems and not problems themselves as suggested by Du Bois (1994).Like American Black Feminism, the South African

feminist movement centres gender in its discourse and takes it as a given with very little critique. Oyewumi (1997: 121) posits that the colonial experience tends to be gendered male, with writers such as Fanon explaining this encounter in male terms and from the perspective of the male as coloniser and colonised. This leaves African women out of the equation and does not explain their experience of the colonial encounter as they were the unseen 'other' of the encounter. She concedes that even in oppressive ways, African men were seen; they were visible in policy making and implementation whereas African women were absent altogether. Oyewumi (1997: 123) also makes it point that although the experiences of African women were different and should be recorded as such, this does not mean that they were colonised by both European men and African men. This does not warrant the narrative of 'double colonisation'.

I do not take lightly the continued subjugation of women in South Africa today, I do not take the oppressions they feel as a result of their gender and I certainly do not choose for them the methods they should use to struggle. What I do take issue with is the white, liberal woman's overbearing voice in this struggle. The white woman, through socialisation has been taught to fear the beastly, sex-obsessed native man who wants to ravage her in her sleep and the feminist movement in South Africa seems to endorse this stance. The feminist agenda as we know sees Black women not advocating for being 'women' but for being 'white women'. I argue therefore that, based on the nature of Black womanhood, white womanhood is nothing to aspire to; in fact no aspect of white humanity as a whole is anything to aspire to. One can understand this need of course, as "Whiteness has positioned itself, falsely, as the standard of humanity which I argue would be an extremely low bar for any human to aspire to reach" (Gordon 2007: 7).

In the South African feminist movement, white men and women are positioned as saving Black women from Black men, shifting the buck swiftly away from themselves as the biggest savage violators of Black women. Mangena (2003: 58) shares the sentiment that, "like many other forms of Western 'science', feminism perceives itself as 'objective, universal and value-free' which of course is 'untrue'". Feminism, as explained above, is context-based, it addresses and focuses on the needs of a specific type of woman, one who is white, middle class and literate. It also conceives itself as

outside of the history and cultural context of women but this too has been proven to be untrue (Mangena 2003: 99 and Kolawole 2002: 92). If we accept that the African society has always been intertwined society then healing, development, inclusion after colonisation should focus on the whole community and not just certain sectors. Black men cannot and will not be helped by helping Black women first, and vice versa. I will demonstrate the uselessness of this manner of thinking as I juxtapose Black feminist thought and African feminist/womanist thought in the section below. I will argue that if feminism is meant to be a movement of 'Black women speaking' then as it stands, it is surely not their narrative in the forefront. From this stand point, the theory cannot be blindly applied to every Black woman everywhere although it does carry value.

Mazwai fashions herself as a feminist, she claims to fight for women's rights and that she supports woman empowerment. She is also one of the biggest critiques of Black women who choose to wear weaves *(Figure 5.3)*. She calls this act 'un-African', self-hating and white aspiring. Mazwai also critiques the centralisation of the English language in schools and the broader society *(Figure 5.4 and 5.5)*. These are some of the issues that she feels 'erode our Africanness'. She in turn gets a lot of critique from other feminists who argue that she in fact doing the opposite of feminism because she seeks to take 'free choice' away from women by forcing them to ascribe to her version of blackness or Africanness.

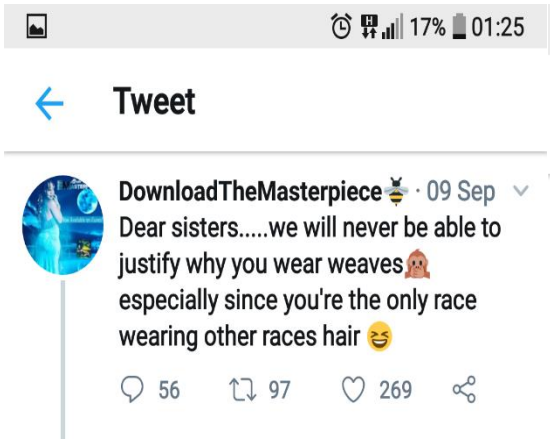


Figure 5.3

Figure 5.4

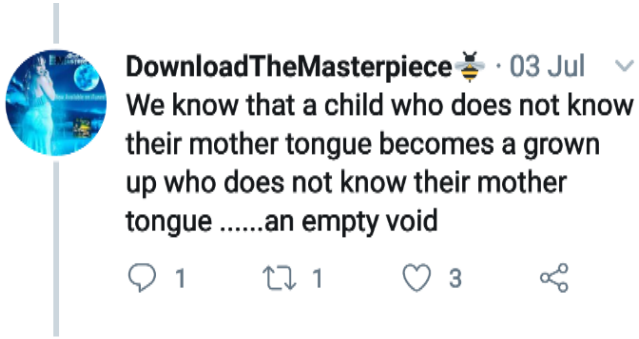


Figure 5.5

The feminist movement is still gaining ground in South Africa; many are still learning and situating themselves in this complicated theory. This is caused by the fact that many are unable to identify the different streams/branches that are encapsulated under this movement and the tenets that govern such movement. Others believe that feminism speaks to the unity of women, supporting one another, helping each other and fighting for the liberation of women. Others situate feminism in the demonization of men, Black men in particular while others believe it is about the economic, social and sexual emancipation of women from men. Many use it as a means of supporting the women they agree with without holding them responsible for their problematics.

Dana, Mazwai and Msimang are all feminists although one cannot pin-point the exact school of thought under which they may fall. They have all declared their allegiance to woman's struggles at one point or another, but neither have been specific about the exact school of thought. This is understandable, people generally move from the assumption that all feminism is good feminism on Black Twitter; especially in the current global political climate. Mazwai can be crass in addressing issues and this gets her in trouble often, particularly with other feminists on Black Twitter. She has been called self-hating, a woman who hates other women too many times to count while Dana has been brought to book for her bailing out an abuser who happened to be her drummer from jail. Many women wondered how she could choose the side of the man/abuser over that of his victim/woman when she claims to be a feminist.

5.4 African Feminism vs Africana Womanism

In this section, I delve into the last of the 'women of colour feminisms' to be discussed in the context of the study, African feminism, and how it differs from the aforementioned. African feminism is first and foremost described as a 'humanistic feminism' that is grounded in traditional African values that perceive gender roles as "complementary, parallel, asymmetrical and autonomously linked in the continuity of human life" (Badejo, 1998: 98). That is to say, contrary to westernised discourse on gender, femininity in African feminism is seen as powerful, strong, beautiful and sensual proving the multiplicity of the logic of gender. My argument here is simple, claiming to be a feminist for Black woman is basically agreeing that the Black woman has always been weak, silent and invisible and African literature clearly proves that isn't the case. African feminism strongly advocates for the shared responsibility of African men and women in the joint responsibility to 'make the world good again' and the continuation of humanity. As a start however, I'd like to employ Badejo's (1998) analysis of the historic place of African women in African society using oral and literary works from our forbearers.

In her study of African womanhood, Badejo (1998) travelled to West Africa in search of answers for the historic position of the Black woman that informs her condition today and her relationship to the Black man. In so doing, she came upon ancient stories of the creation of the earth where the female deity Osun comes into light. Osun is the goddess of wealth, femininity, power and fertility in this narrative. She is said to have been the only woman present at the creation of the world and when she asked the creator what her role would be on earth, the creator answered that she would be 'the giver and protector of children, the mother of them all'. She was known as a warrior who rose up and fought to defend her people. The Akan people profess of the goddess Abenaa Birem who possesses similar traits. She too is a wealthy goddess symbolised by gold/brass paraphernalia, she too gives and protects children and her people. She is fierce warrior with large numbers of men and women in her army who fight at her will. Such, dear reader, is a brief legacy of African womanhood. On the other hand, African women appear primarily as leaders, warriors, religious rulers, healers, wives, priestesses, fighters, feminine, mothers, givers, protectors and goddesses in our historic view. Badejo (1998) also noted that, before the colonial encounter, the African

society was littered with matrilineal, patrilineal and bilineal communities in which gender roles were complementary and never in competition. The African woman was powerful force, a leader and a follower entrusted with the defence of her people. The African man too was a leader and a follower who was entrusted with protecting and defending her power in physical and spiritual ways. The colonial-enslavement encounter changed this dynamic completely by stripping the African woman of her power and relegating her to the weak, meagre status of the white woman.

The exchange in leadership-follower roles should be seen as a natural order of things and not a sign of weakness or inability on the part of either party. He protects her and she protects him, because in this society both are leaders and followers. And so I argue, for African women to aspire to white womanhood would be aspiring to womanhood that is culturally/historically deficient and shallow. In contrast to the Black feminist agenda in the west, Ntseane (2011) posits that, African feminism is 'part of the Afrocentric paradigm' that seeks to highlight the discourse of gender inequality in the neo-colonial world. She adds, 'it is informed by African women's stance of the need to challenge the oppression of women without alienating African men and rejecting African culture. African feminism expresses the particular concerns of African women and questions/critiques some features of so-called traditional African values without denigrating them.

The major difference between African feminism and other feminisms is that, it recognises Black men as partners in the struggle against gender oppression rather than enemies. It espouses the old African adage that prescribes that '*umntu ngumntu ngabantu*' or as Mazama (2007) sees it 'what makes a man is a woman: likewise what makes a woman is a man'. African feminism stresses the importance of community and shared roles in building just, fair, progressive and stable communities. It also does much needed work in de-centering 'gender' as we know it and challenging the western-assigned gender roles that are present themselves as 'African culture'. In a similar trail of thought, Yaa Asantewaa-Reed (2001: 168) presents "Africana Womanism" as developed by Dr Clenora Hudson Weems.Weems (1997) explained that Africana Womanism is an ideology that is created for all women of African descent wherever in the world they may be. It is grounded in African culture and so it focuses on the particular "experiences, struggles, needs and desires of Africana women" (Yaa

Asantewaa-Reed (2001: 168). Like many other Black women at the time, Weems was disconcerted with the feminist movement after noticing its racist inclination and sought to conceptualise new terminology for the unique struggles of Africana women. The term “Africana”, she claimed, accounts for the diasporic experience as well continental experience. Weems (1997) further explained that, these were Africana women on the continent of Africa as well as ‘African Caribbeans, African Americans, African Europeans, and African Canadians’.

Similarly to African feminism, Africana womanism, although dealing with gender oppression of women emphasises that African women’s struggles are nothing to be separated from Africana men as these two entities struggle together. Weems stresses that Africana womanism is different from other woman-based theories because it takes seriously the inseparability and oneness of the Africana man and woman in struggle. Weems makes it clear that she disagrees with Africana thinkers who simply adopt labels, like feminism, that have nothing to do with the African experience- that do not even acknowledge the African experience. She is adamant in calling the feminist movement out for modelling itself out the Black woman’s struggle and excluding her completely from its discourses. She lambasts, “they can name themselves after us, but it is stupid for us to name ourselves after them” (Yaa Asantewaa-Reed 2001: 170). Essentially, Yaa Asentewaa-Reed (2001) posits that ‘feminism’ is named after the white woman’s struggles, the white woman fashioned this movement after historic Black women but named it for herself. She named it to reflect her needs, fears, ambitions and hopes; because of this, the Black woman should not subscribe to this school of thought.

Another one of Weems’ (1997) critique of the different feminisms is that they focus on women as the number one priority of their struggle, she questions how can Black people have such a luxury in a race that is so oppressed, men, women and children equally? Africana womanism discuses gender in authentic terms, as we are indeed all trapped in a patriarchal system but it does not use it as an exclusionary tactic, Black me are afforded their place as partners to Black women in the struggle for liberation and vice versa. Africana womanism also accounts for the unique experiences of the Africana woman that are ignored in the mainstream feminist movement. The womanist movement seems to advocate for a race first approach that urges the liberation of the

race entirely so that African traditional ways of being can be restored, thereby giving Africana women their historic place back in society. Blay (2008: 65) critiques Africana Womanism as being impractical and non-functional as it does not address African women's oppressions in the present. She does credit Weems for providing a detailed discussion on the place of the Black woman in African cosmology which clearly differs from that of the white woman. Blay (2008: 65) claims that Weems, like many African-American scholars views Africa as a homogeneous group of people gathered around a campfire sharing one big "African culture". She argues that Africa is large, vast continent inhabited by people who practice different cultures and have different beliefs. By positing Africana womanism as the saviour for African-descendent women all over the world, using African culture as a corner stone, Blay (2008) argues, Weems does not provide any viable guidance for Africana communities outside of the USA. She in turn proposes African feminism as a viable option claiming that it is applicable to Black women in their struggle for gender emancipation.

Blay, Ongundipe-Leslie, and Ata Aidoo in Blay (2008: 67) all argue that, "African societies have always had gender activism, pre-colonial Africa and throughout colonisation". With this in mind therefore, feminism is more relevant today when gender oppression is so evident because it addresses Black woman's condition at present and offers a more functional options for Black women. In this regard, I would like to present not only Weems assertion that Black women need to claim the right to 'name' themselves and not inherit labels that others have elected for themselves. It seems to me there are many similarities and agreements between African feminism and Africana womanism, the major separation appears at the name/label "feminism" which has Western origins in white women's movements.

One gets the sense that Blay (2008), perhaps due to context, do not take into account the racialized undertones of the feminist movement and how it is exclusionary to Black woman's context and history. These scholars also seem to think that the already established feminist movement as designated by white feminists is the only form of activism available to Black women and perhaps that developing their own thought on their unique oppression, that is particular not only in ideology but in naming might not be as successful. Oyewumi in her lecture at the UNISA 'Decoloniality Summer School' (2018) posits that, the feminist movement is inherently un-African and should not be

emulated by Black women as it fundamentally excludes them from its discourse. As we historicise the plight of the Black woman, she is currently one of the most oppressed beings on earth with her body torn to pieces by various forms of oppression and that needs to be reckoned with.

5.5 The Objectification of the Black female body

In this section I discuss the objectification of the Black woman's body and how this subsequently sanctions and justifies her subordination. In this regard I use Saartjie Baartman as lens through which I examine and situate this objectification. The adduction, abuse, parading, illness, death and display of Saartjie's remains chronicle the trajectory of the Black woman's journey in real or perceived ways. As a brief background, Saartjie was a Khoikhoi woman born in 1789 in the province now known as the Eastern Cape, South Africa. She lived on a colonial farm in which her family is believed to have been servants. She lost her parents at a very young age, her mother at 2 years and father just as she reached adolescence.

As the colonial expansion ensued, many Black Africans worked for the Dutch as slave labour. Sara was sixteen at the time. Sara ended up in the service of the Cezar brothers as a domestic servant in Cape Town. It is said that in 1810, Saartjie signed a contract agreeing to travel to Europe with the Cezar brothers as domestic servant and to be occasionally 'exhibited' in public for money. It was asserted that, the contract entitled her to a portion of the earnings from her exhibitions; the alleged signature in the contract has been disputed by local historians. Sara Baartman signifies the devaluation of the Black woman in the world as a whole, followed by the enslavement of Africans and the rape, pillaging and objectification of the African woman's body and by extension, the African continent.

I assert that, no African anywhere in the world will have dignity until the dignity and divinity of the Black woman's body has been restored to its rightful place. Through Sara and the way she is written in history, the Black woman has been made complicit in her own exploitation (Young 1997: 669). The Black woman, by virtue of her 'abnormal' body and its features, is un-exploitable, un-rapeable, and un-oppressable because she warrants these acts upon her simply by appearing. Young (1997: 699)

notes how Sara is cast as a “sovereign, consenting individual with the freedom and agency to trade in her human dignity for the promise of material gain” in Suzan-Lori Park’s Venus. Parks uses art as a historical representation of Sara and her time in Europe; she of course uses most of the narrative that her captors wrote to describe her journey to the continent. In this work, Parks claims that Sara enjoyed being paraded naked at freak-shows for public consumption. In essence, this Black woman from an exploited background where her people are used as slave labour for Dutch thieves has somehow managed to have enough power and agency to sell herself to the European market at the cost of her human dignity. The Black woman is not worthy of protection or care, she is the ultimate other of the ‘normalised’ white woman who deserves protection from everyone around her. The Black woman instead, allows, gives permission to her rapist and murderer therefore committing these acts against her cannot possibly be criminal (Young 1997: 701). Her body invites them. Using Saartjie to explain the sex trafficking of young Nigerian women to Europe, Ifekwunigwe (2004: 398) theorises “the thin line volition, agency and victimhood where Black female sexuality is concerned”.

Ifekwunigwe (2004) uses not only ethnographic views of this phenomenon but a documentary series aptly titled ‘Foreign Bodies’ produced by European film makers who claim to seek answers for European men’s obsession with Black and brown prostitutes. This documentary laments these undocumented migrant women first for being in Europe in non-conventional ways and seems to blame them for the moral degeneration of the continent through the work they do, voluntarily or forcefully. The film plays into the stereotype of the ‘hypersexual Black woman’ with no sexual inhibitions where the women are described as an ‘extraordinary spectacle’. It is said that when arrested, these women display primitive traits like “biting, smearing police with menstrual blood” (Ifekwunigwe 2004: 400). Although this film fashions itself as humanising tool for these clearly exploited women, using such language where Black bodies are the subject does nothing more than dehumanise, animalise, and victimise them further. This language plays into the 18th and 19th century racist trope of representing Black people as socially and morally degenerate. This is how Saartjie ends up in Europe as a sex trafficked woman who gets no help even from the legal system. Young (1997) and later Youe (2007) notes in dismay how an anti-slaving court decided that she was not enslaved but actively participated in her condition even

though she was caged and exhibited with animals skins. This confirms the inability of neo-colonial states to protect Black women with the same passion as their white counterparts, for they appear to be complicit in their exploitation just by 'being'. Rather, the Black female bodies are the "lens through which forms of deviant white female sexuality is viewed" Ifekwunigwe (2004: 400). The Black female body represents the intersection of notions of "beauty with ugliness, desire with degradation, licence with taboo, and transcendent goddess with carnal beast" (Youe 2007: 564). The Black woman, from the times of Saartjie Baartman represents a dilemma steeped in desire, fetishisation, hate and commodification. The Black woman is never secure in the family of 'human'; this for her is an ever moving target that she never seems to catch up to. When Baartman demanded a share of her exhibitions as promised, her captors would swear at her and threaten her with gang rape. This after being displayed in public from 10 AM to 10 PM from Monday to Saturday (Osha 2008: 83).

Young (1997: 705) argues that the notion of 'African savagery' which was said to justify slavery should be seen as Europe's darkest impulses projected onto Africans. French comparative anatomist Dr George Cuvier, who, despite her grave illness commissioned a nude painting of Baartman for 'science' is also said to have had a secret sexual affair with Baartman. Dr Cuvier is said to have admitted to have necrophilia on Baartman's corpse after her death, admitting that he wanted to 'keep all my sweets to myself, I'm very greedy' before dissecting her body into parts. The focus of Saartjie's dehumanisation, exhibition, and humiliation had always been her 'strangely protruding buttocks and labia minora. European men and woman would circle her, poking her with their canes to see if it was all 'natural' (Youe 2007: 564). Ifekwunigwe (2004: 400) posits that, Europe never shed its obsession with Black women's buttocks.

She argues that even though the documentary series in question had white women in the production team, the shots somehow never shifted focus from the buttocks of the Nigerian prostitutes, as if further selling them while claiming to save them. As clearly demonstrated, it is always 'open season' on the Black woman's body. She has yet to regain the dignity that was cruelly snatched from her when Saartjie Baartman was captured and exploited, or when West African women ended up in the Americas as sexual objects for the masters, or when African continues to raped and pillaged by

world powers. A simple look at today's popular music and film culture proves the continued devaluation and commodification of the Black woman's body. Her nude figure and buttocks are still used to promote and sell music and film productions, much like the freak-shows in which Saartjie was forced into. Of course today the Black woman thinks she has agency and that she chooses to be cast in this light, she too does not account for the historicity of her body and how this history could possibly inform her positionality today. The phrase 'sex sells' seems to be disproportionately applicable to the Black woman and her "abnormal" body parts that make money when paraded for public consumption thereby informing the stereotype that she is not worthy and deserving of every mistreatment directed at her still.

The Black community, particularly Black men must be held to account for, over space and time, also reducing the Black woman to her figure. This reductionist outlook leads to the discarding of Black women's intellectual, scientific, social and socio-economic contributions. This pathology shows its face every so often when Black women have an opinion, they get told to 'know their place' as if their place is not in thinking or speaking. The Black woman still remains an object, be it of desire or degradation, beauty or ugliness, humanity or bestiality. She is still an object. One can easily transpose narratives about Saartjie Baartman for example, onto narratives about Serena Williams and her 'abnormal' form, or Ntsiki Mazwai and her 'abnormal' mouth, Sisonke Msimang and her 'abnormal' thoughts, or even Simphiwe Dana and her 'abnormal' expectations. The Black woman is still regarded as object, decided for without.

5.6 Bodies that remember: The Black Woman's body as a battleground

In this section, I argue that the Black woman's body represents a battleground; an active crime scene that is ignored by all who have bruised and battered it. The point is to proclaim that the anti-Black world turns a blind eye to the Black woman's suffering whoever commits or commissions it; but her body remembers all the strife and the world's ignorance towards it. Historically, as briefly explained above; the Black woman's physique and form was used by the sciences to confirm the racist notion that Black people were subhuman if human at all. I have discussed the tragedy of Saartjie Baartman elsewhere in this text serves as a backdrop to much of what I theorise here.

The Black woman's 'Otherness' has served as a motive not only to undervalue her whole race, but to legitimise actions that brutalise and dehumanise her person. While these brutal acts were and continue to be performed on her, she is subsequently silenced so she cannot hold responsible to account or to seek justice. As Hill (2011) theorises, when the Black woman brings up in conversation the history of her body; the memories it remembers and the cruelty it suffers she becomes a problem. SHE becomes the problem and not any of the many issues she brings forth. The experience of herself as a problem when she speaks out leaves her in a dilemma; she can either enforce the discussion and further entrench herself as a problem or choose to silence her throbbing body to make other comfortable. For many centuries, many Black women have chosen silence. They never sought justice from 'massa' for all those years of rape, enslavement, dislocation from family, sale of her children or disenfranchisement. They never held the Black man responsible for imitating 'massa's' ways by abusing, devaluing and oppressing them in the community and home.

South African Black Twitter has been engulfed in very difficult conversations around the relationship between Black men and women, most notably identifiable through the moniker #MenAreTrash. This after countless have been reported missing, kidnapped, murdered, raped and brutalised by Black men in the country. Fuelled further by the rise in the publicity of femicide and the rise in the number of Black women who have been killed by Black men with whom they shared their lives. This is not to claim any of these issues as new phenomenon but perhaps as new in the national discourse, women are no longer willing to keep silent for the sake of the other's comfort.

The conversation has therefore shifted from the historical positioning of her body in the hands of the coloniser to the current state of her being in the hands of her supposed partner, the Black woman has resolved to be a problem and lay bare the knowledge of her body for all to see. She has realised that her silence only makes her more vulnerable as those who commit crimes against her are never held to account, she will hold them responsible now; even at the risk of being ostracised. Black women who are active on Black Twitter have begun to question the patriarchal nature of culture, what we perceive as our traditions, marriages between Black men and women and family structures that are routed in religion or culture.

Figure 5.6

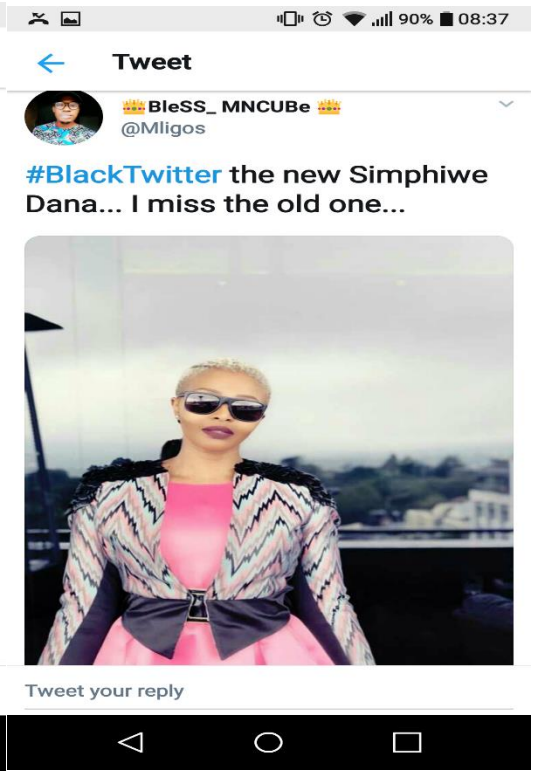


Figure 5.7

Demonstrated above *(Figure 5.6 and 5.7*) is the manner in which, even to Black men, the Black woman's body is never her own. She is expected to bend and contour herself to fit into what everyone's vision of her is whether she likes it or not. Dana has transformed her 'look' over the years, as many people do, while others notice and praise her beauty. There are some who seek to keep her in a box they have created for her. The Black woman then becomes an object who must enjoy her body as far as the men enjoy it, must change herself as much as it pleases a man and must remain within boundaries that created by men.

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter has looked into the Black woman's ability to speak her truth and the vehicles she has used when the world shut her down. First, I asked questions of her ability to speak rooted in Spivak's (2010) intervention wondering whether there is space in the world for the subaltern to speak. In this logic, feminism, African feminism and womanism are positioned as women's attempts to speak and to be heard. Of course I have provided critique of the different feminisms as ideology that sanitises the white man of the oppression of Black women by demonising the Black man without

any historic context. This chapter has made it clear that, there are major problems in the Black community, including those between the Black man and woman but I also posit that there are in-depth pathologies rooted the colonial and slave experience that need to be healed in order to heal the community as a whole. The last section of the chapter speaks to the manner in which the Black woman's body has been objectified within and outside of the Black community. In this section, all those who have oppressed the Black woman in any fashion are held to account. From the Black community that silences her through culture, tradition and custom to the white community that has oppressed her for centuries. I posit here that, the Black woman's body has turned into a battleground within and without her community, the femicide, domestic abuse, sexism, patriarchy and racism that she faces daily make her pariah in the world as a whole. Her body turned into an object to be exploited by all who fashion themselves as her master. I posit here that, she speaks although she does not have audience. Her humanity requires restoration but, she still speaks her pain and thinks through her condition and the condition of those who look like her.

CHAPTER 6: AIN'T I A BLACK PUBLIC INTELLECTUAL?

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I seek to examine the Black woman as a public intellectual, as such I will engage this figure in her own right using Dabashi's (2015) 'can non-Europeans think?'. I have narrowed this question to the intellectual labour of the Black woman in history and currently. This chapter is positioned in this way purposely, I attempt to think through the Black woman speaking through her humanity and pain using Spivak's 'can the subaltern speak' and link that humanity to her an as an intellectual being through Dabashi (2015). My point of departure here is to position the Black woman as an intellectual proper, arguing that, her ideas should be taken as such and we should not have to stretch narrative by positioning her as a 'Black woman public intellectual' as if her ideas are all based on gender or femininity. Firstly, I will examine the historical intellectual tradition of Black women and situate the Black woman as a producer, custodian and disseminator of knowledge in her community.

This argument is meant to acknowledge the different kinds of 'knowing' that exist in the world as knowledge proper, even if they are outside of the westernised university. Secondly, I posit that the racist, sexist, patriarchal, neo-colonial world is guilty of ignoring the Black woman's intellectual labour because she asks difficult questions. The world is not ready to answer for the injustice committed against the Black woman so it positions her and her thought as 'problematic'. Thirdly, the Black woman's intellectual labour is then co-opted and placed under a phallic shadow. Her work is attributed to her association to a man, a partner, her father or her brother. I provide examples of women who are first described as 'the wife of…' every time their own personal achievements are discussed. The last section of this chapter is a praise for women who have laid their bodies on the line in defiance to oppressive practices that seek to burn them at the stake for their intellectual labour. Dana, Mazwai and Msimang are then situated as these 'witches' who think, speak, write, sing and dance the Black condition even when the activity puts their bodies in danger.

6.2 Can the Black Woman Think?

Can the Black woman think? Can she intellectualise? As I begin to contemplate, I herein employ Dabashi's (2015: 31) question 'can non-Europeans think?' in situating the Black woman and her intellectual labour. I will first situate the intellectual tradition of Black women in history and then explain how it manifests on Black Twitter, all as an attempt to think through the pain and trauma of her being. It is no secret that Black women have a long history of being producers and custodians of knowledge in African society, with activist-theoretical movements like feminism being modelled after their struggles. For example, it was the Black woman who suffered the brunt of the world's cruelty at the inception of capitalist-racism. It was also the Black woman who stood up to this these social ills, informing women's movements for generations to come. However, the colonial encounter brought with it the inferiorisation and marginalisation of the Black woman, perhaps based on the general Western outlook on women and their role in society. African women are recorded in history as warriors, goddesses, queens and hunter-gatherers who ruled nations and fought great wars; they are also recorded as having been strategists and teachers whose intellectual capabilities were not limited to or defined by their gender. Western narrative, which thrived on patriarchy, introduced western education to train 'good natives' and excluded the Black woman, whose only duty would be, like white woman, limited within the borders of the domestic site.

In Black literary works, the intellectual tends to be masculinised, in Fanon's, West's through to Biko and Thiongos' works and many others, there is deliberate brushing over the contributions of African women as custodians and distributors of knowledge centuries prior to colonialism and its aftermath. For example, Biko (2004) speaks a lot about the need for the restoration of the Black self in the fight against oppression. He situates oppression not only in the physical but also in the psychological realm and posits that the Black 'man' has been made a shell of his former self and needs to be brought back to "himself". This is the case in Fanon's ([1952] 2008) work; he situates a lot of literature on the effects of colonisation exclusively on the Black man; seemingly ignoring the Black woman completely. He further situates the 'bourgeoisie' class and native intellectual in masculinised vocabulary, externalising the Black woman from these activities completely.

When Western/colonial education was first introduced, many African societies forbade having girls/women enrolled in school. The colonial racist establishment propagated this for generations; such that, Africans thought of educating girls as a pointless exercise, as girls would get married and be of no benefit to their family. Perhaps, on the other hand, African societies did not want to expose their women, who were in fact custodians of indigenous knowledge and were tasked with passing it on to the next generation, exposed to colonial education that would distort or destroy this ever-important indigenous knowledge. The Black woman was entrusted with imparting knowledge of 'the self within a community' to the young, with passing on the language to generations hence the term 'mother-tongue'.

This most basic human need that any society can advocate for was pathologised and fronted as primitive and unthinking in Western propaganda, and we have all accepted it as such with little interrogation. This does not come as a surprise as any kind of knowledge that deviates from the European canon is not seen as knowledge and so what Black people had and knew before the colonial encounter was not seen as 'knowing'. Dabashi (2015: 32) vehemently posits that, "when thinking happens in the global south it is termed 'ethno-philosophy', or 'ethno-music', or 'traditional art' and these thinkers are termed 'native/traditional intellectuals'". He asserts that, "with European universalisation, everything that comes out of that continent becomes the norm while other ways of being are localised/provincialized. In the same vein, the intellectual contributions of people of colour historically and currently cannot possibly be seen as contributions and their ways of knowing before white invasion cannot possibly be knowing proper" (Dabashi 2015: 33).

Over time, the Black woman has been exposed to colonial education and little evidence exists as to the effect of this education on the psyche of Black women. Nair (1995) described the school as a weapon that was used by colonialists to trim the memory of the native, more effectively to server the head from the body, the source of knowledge. The subjects of colonial education tend to be left in limbo between two irreconcilable worlds, with the pressure to choose one or the other. In neo-colonial Africa, the effects of the education of women has only recently began to be studied, are the custodians and producers of indigenous knowledge still centred in indigenous thought proper? If they possess such vast indigenous knowledge then why did they

not struggle as much as their male counterparts against colonisation? In fact they did but all resistance to colonialism has been coded male which gives the false impression that women joined the fight much later in the struggle or contributed little to the struggle. Not only is this the opposite of how African society was organised, in that the likes of Queen Nzinga defeated invaders as strategists and warriors, but also Mkabayi ka Jama as Shaka Zulu's right hand adviser helped strategise against colonialists and was revered for her role as 'babezala' which means female-father in isiZulu. Conditions associated with the history of colonialism and colonial education cannot only be associated with men, as women have been in the frontlines of the anti-colonial struggle throughout. The conditions resulting from the colonial experience on the Black woman tend to be seen as 'natural' conditions emanating from her 'unstable psyche' and never as residual effects of the colonial encounter.

Black women are then described as insane, angry or overly dramatic while their male counterparts are described as 'stupid' or 'drunkard', ailments that are higher up on the scale of social deviances. Nair (1995) argues that, the native woman's madness is always attributed to 'childlessness, celibacy, PMS or menopause', all of which are emotional/physical reactions and none registering intellectual trauma thereby insinuating emotionally frustrated rather than politically conscious women. It is as thought the Black woman is not front row witnessing her people being demolished by a ruthless system, as if she is not agonising about that. Instead she is reduced to solely the activities of her genitals and womb and not intellectual agony at the dire political positionality of her people. I have explained above that the concepts of intellectual, knowledge and education were understood differently in African and western societies. I therefore implore the reader to keep this mind as we continue to examine the colonised woman's intellectual labour.

The Black woman then becomes an object to be spoken for, spoken about, spoken at and spoken of. Maldonado-Torres (2016) perhaps best explains the psyche behind this phenomenon as a direct result of coloniality, the continuation of a system which has set the Black man on a collision course constantly attempting to reach for 'masculinity' and never being able to practice such masculinity in the colonial system in which he is but a 'boy'. In the absence of this satisfaction outside the home, the Black man then imposes his masculinity in the home, on his woman by putting her in

her place in order to get his dose of ‘masculinity’ for the day. This type of ‘thingification’ legitimises the dismissal of the Black woman from intellectual discourse, where she is assumed to be ‘angry’, or ‘on her period’, ‘irrational’ or ‘PMSing’ if she appears to have too much of an opinion in and outside of the Black intellectual discourse. The Black woman therefore, cannot possibly be responding to an observed socio-economic discomfort but her opinions can only be a result of some uncontrollable biological function that renders her completely irrational and she must be put in her place immediately. In essence, the Black woman is still a ‘thing’ and any formation or expression of an opinion from her is abnormal. The Black woman is therefore engaged in a constant intellectual protest, directed to the colonial system and to her own community where ‘culture’ silences her.

The Black woman is reduced to a ‘body’ that is dissected at the whim of the white supremacist patriarchal scheme of things. This should not be mistaken as arguing that the struggles of the Black woman are different to those of the Black man, an object is an object regardless of gender. Maldonado-Torres (2016) asserts that, general western gender norms do not apply to the colonised subject, that a Black woman cannot be considered as ‘feminine’ in the same way a white woman is feminine; as masculinity is not applied to the Black man as it is to the white man. This simply means that the struggle of the colonised male and female cannot and should not be separated on the basis of western gender norms because they do not apply to the subject in same way they apply to humans proper. When femininity is applied to the Black woman, it is done is pathological ways; instead of ‘irrational’ like the white woman she is ‘crazy’. As opposed to being ‘loud’ or ‘talkative’, the Black woman is ‘intimidating’ or ‘scary’.

The Black man is treated in the same way, instead of being ‘assertive’ like the white man he is ‘aggressive’, and instead of being ‘firm/strong’ the Black man is ‘violent/beastly’. Maldonado-Torres (2016) also shows that, gender norms are relative where Black people are concerned as during slavery/occupation, both the Black man and woman were penetrated by the ‘master’ in his power play. Black women, as posited by Hill (2011) are carving spaces for themselves in literature and refusing to be spoken for, of or about. They assert their agency and ability to speak for themselves. Alcoff (1991: 7) emphasises that, “advocacy for the oppressed must come

to be done principally by the oppressed themselves". As oppression is their lived experience, only the oppressed can articulate their position in a significant manner. She further argues that, any form of activism, like knowledge, is embodied and stems from the speaker's positionality. With that said, the speaker's location (social and identity) can result in the "authorisation or de-authorisation" of the speech. The speaker can therefore be involved in speaking for the oppressed natives, while the natives stand on the other side of the tracks naked, exposed, and dissected and 'Othered' albeit with good intensions. The Black intellectual then must take a central position in thinking through and articulating on her own experiences as an oppressed being. Despite the deafening silence on her experiences, the Black woman, for as long coloniality has existed, has been engaged in the fight for decoloniality. She has been writing herself into history despite a westernised system that did not recognise her contributions. I position Black Twitter as the site of struggle for liberation, a space in which blackness speaks for itself in a world that is otherwise deaf to its pain.

Black Twitter has permitted women like Dana, Mazwai and Msimang to represent themselves as they choose; not spoken for or about. They conduct activism on the platform, they propose solution for different problems, they protest against oppression and discrimination; with the people. They are inspired by the perpetual racial inequalities in the country. Boswell (2003) explains the social and racial structure of South Africa concerning Black female intellectuals in the literary field when she interviews the founding members of WEAVE (Women's Education and Artistic Voice Expression) in the Western Cape Province.

These women argue that they identify as black, as a form of protest even though they are officially classified as African, Coloured and Indian in the country. They denounce these labels and rather self-identify as Black in order to assert their 'mental attitude' as suggested by Biko's Black Consciousness movement. These women assert this identity in order to highlight not only the invisibilisation and silencing of Black women in the literary and intellectual sphere but also as a political statement on the continued oppression of people of colour in the country. As a response to exclusions such as these, Black public intellectuals and Black people in general have then created counter-spaces like Black Twitter so that they can express freely without gatekeeping the Black condition. Not only has the Black woman been ostracised in in the intellectual

sphere, her body has also been reduced to a battleground for man whose agenda was to position himself above her. From Saartjie Baartman to present day Ntsiki Mazwai, the Black female has presented an age-old dilemma for both Black and white men. She is both revered and eroticised, she is called grotesque and hypersexualised, and she is beautiful and ugly. All this is an attempt to ensure that the Black woman knows that she and all she has to offer is never adequate, and never recognised. She must understand that her place is not in thinking or acting; she must remain domesticated to speak only when spoken to which has enhanced the project of ignoring Black women's contributions in society.

As stated above, his-story (history, the European man's story) used Black women to strengthen the notion of blacks as an inferior group. As the creators and breeders of the Black nation, such "lascivious", "promiscuous" and "savage" women could not possibly raise a civilised nation. Black women's physique has been presented as proof that blacks were inhuman savages, such myths have never been publicly dismantled and so the Black woman has never had the opportunity to see herself as a thinker (Hobson, 2003). On the back of this kind of narrative, the Black woman has largely been locked out of the narrative as a producer of theory and valid literature. She has been reduced to a domestic creature whose only place was in kitchen, to speak only when spoken to, to be seen and not heard a 'thing'.

It is therefore inconceivable that a 'thing', with no intellectual density or ontology suddenly wants to form an opinion. Perhaps this is a result of colonialism and its disregard for women in general and Black women in particular, but this kind of attitude has permeated the Black community and the Black family where the Black women's contributions are consistently trampled upon or worse, ignored. This positionality in the community and in the intellectual sphere has had dire implications for Black women, how they perceive themselves and how they are received as intellectuals. When Du Bois (1994) asks how it feels to be a problem, he explains the Black women's predicament perfectly. The Black women is a problem within and outside of her community, when she starts to ask questions of the white supremacist establishment she gets marginalised and when she questions the acceptance of patriarchy in her community she is again marginalised. The Black woman's experience can be summed up in the statement, as a "strange" experience due to the consistent state of

uncertainty imposed on her by the neo-colonial, white supremacist, patriarchal society. When she intellectualises from her position, she is not thinking but is being an 'over-emotional, irrational, angry woman'. The Black woman is ultimate subalternised other as she is seen as everything that is wrong with her race; however, she continues to speak and think as she has historically.

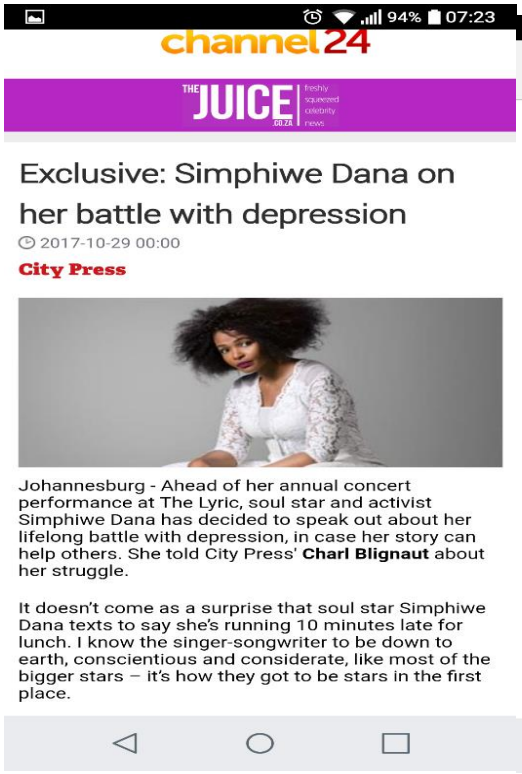


Figure 6.1

Figure 6.2

Figure 6.3

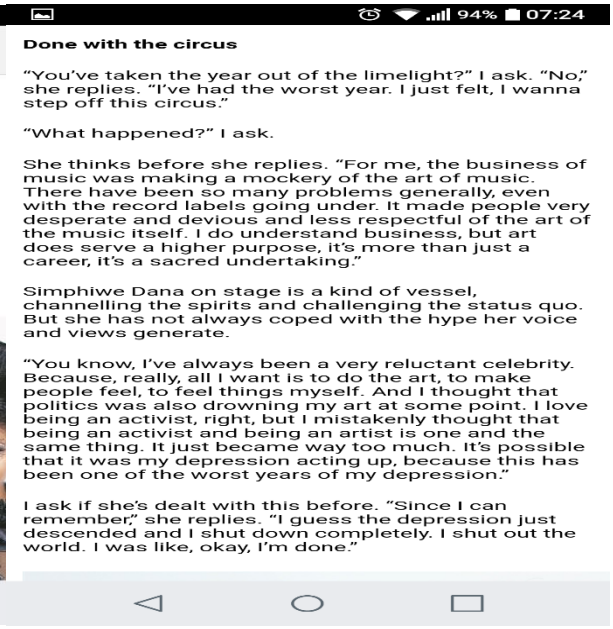
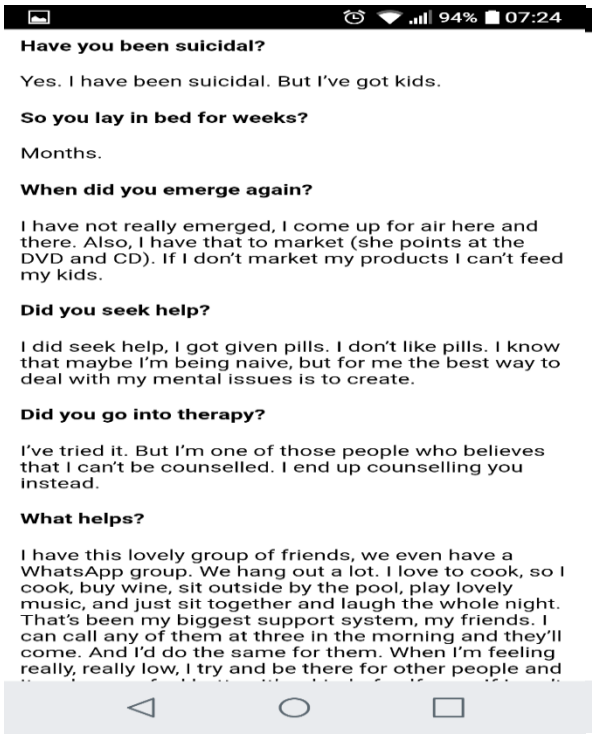


Figure 6.4



Have you been suicidal?

Yes. I have been suicidal. But I've got kids.

So you lay in bed for weeks?

Months.

When did you emerge again?

I have not really emerged, I come up for air here and there. Also, I have that to market (she points at the DVD and CD). If I don't market my products I can't feed my kids.

Did you seek help?

I did seek help, I got given pills. I don't like pills. I know that maybe I'm being naive, but for me the best way to deal with my mental issues is to create.

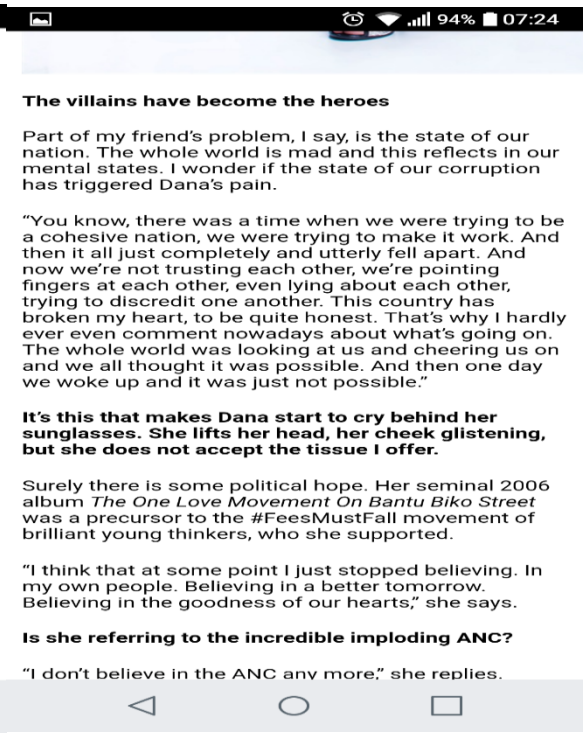
Did you go into therapy?

I've tried it. But I'm one of those people who believes that I can't be counselled. I end up counselling you instead.

What helps?

I have this lovely group of friends, we even have a WhatsApp group. We hang out a lot. I love to cook, so I cook, buy wine, sit outside by the pool, play lovely music, and just sit together and laugh the whole night. That's been my biggest support system, my friends. I can call any of them at three in the morning and they'll come. And I'd do the same for them. When I'm feeling really, really low, I try and be there for other people and

Figure 6.5



The villains have become the heroes

Part of my friend's problem, I say, is the state of our nation. The whole world is mad and this reflects in our mental states. I wonder if the state of our corruption has triggered Dana's pain.

"You know, there was a time when we were trying to be a cohesive nation, we were trying to make it work. And then it all just completely and utterly fell apart. And now we're not trusting each other, we're pointing fingers at each other, even lying about each other, trying to discredit one another. This country has broken my heart, to be quite honest. That's why I hardly ever even comment nowadays about what's going on. The whole world was looking at us and cheering us on and we all thought it was possible. And then one day we woke up and it was just not possible."

It's this that makes Dana start to cry behind her sunglasses. She lifts her head, her cheek glistening, but she does not accept the tissue I offer.

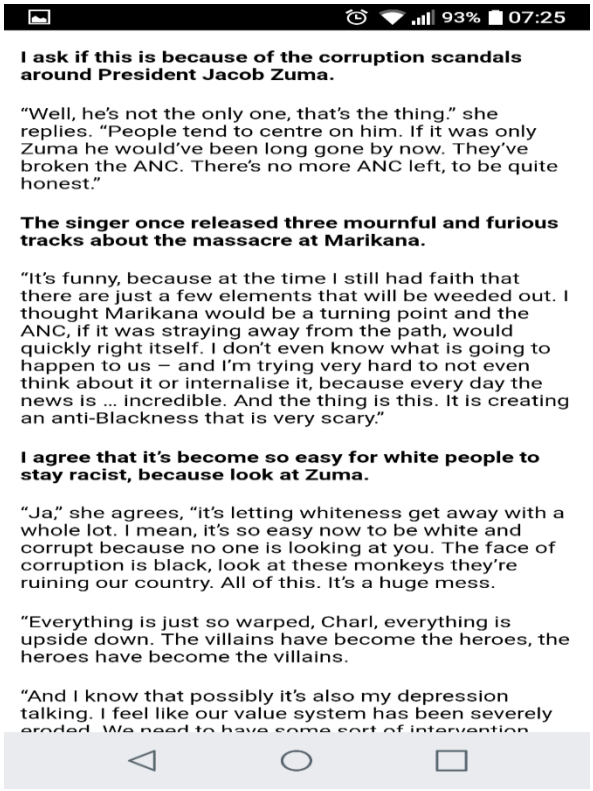
Surely there is some political hope. Her seminal 2006 album *The One Love Movement On Bantu Biko Street* was a precursor to the #FeesMustFall movement of brilliant young thinkers, who she supported.

"I think that at some point I just stopped believing. In my own people. Believing in a better tomorrow. Believing in the goodness of our hearts," she says.

Is she referring to the incredible imploding ANC?

"I don't believe in the ANC any more," she replies.

Figure 6.6



I ask if this is because of the corruption scandals around President Jacob Zuma.

"Well, he's not the only one, that's the thing." she replies. "People tend to centre on him. If it was only Zuma he would've been long gone by now. They've broken the ANC. There's no more ANC left, to be quite honest."

The singer once released three mournful and furious tracks about the massacre at Marikana.

"It's funny, because at the time I still had faith that there are just a few elements that will be weeded out. I thought Marikana would be a turning point and the ANC, if it was straying away from the path, would quickly right itself. I don't even know what is going to happen to us – and I'm trying very hard to not even think about it or internalise it, because every day the news is ... incredible. And the thing is this. It is creating an anti-Blackness that is very scary."

I agree that it's become so easy for white people to stay racist, because look at Zuma.

"Ja," she agrees, "it's letting whiteness get away with a whole lot. I mean, it's so easy now to be white and corrupt because no one is looking at you. The face of corruption is black, look at these monkeys they're ruining our country. All of this. It's a huge mess.

"Everything is just so warped, Charl, everything is upside down. The villains have become the heroes, the heroes have become the villains.

"And I know that possibly it's also my depression talking. I feel like our value system has been severely

Figure 6.7

I have found it pertinent at this juncture to share the article above *(Figure 6.1 to 6.7)* in which Dana speaks candidly about her depression. After a long hiatus from social media, performances and media engagements; Dana spoke to City Press about the demons she has been battling in her life. In the final chapter of this study I speak to the depression that one inevitably encounters once you look under the veil of 'rainbow' and assess the Black condition closely. Dana has always been a very intuitive artist, who addressed this condition before it was even acceptable. Her second album, *The One Love Movement on Bantu Biko Street will* go down in history as one of her most profound offerings; although not the most successful on the market.

In this album she let it all hang out; she posed tough questions, posed bold assertions and resigned completely from the rainbow nation. She let us know that, she was on our side. These thoughts can cause one to think deeply about the condition of her people. In the article above, she mentions that she has had suicidal thoughts during her darkest times and has stayed in bed for months. She is bothered by state of the nation; she mentions how conflicted we are and how much we've lost genuine human goodness. She mentions the deaths of 34 Marikana miners, the state of corruption in government and racism as a few of the things that bother her. It is pertinent that we start to deal with ourselves in the Black community, with the centuries of trauma we carry in our DNA that is aroused by our continued oppression. Dana is us and we are her, in so many ways, a Black woman thinking through her nervous condition.

Dana, Mazwai and Msimang seem to practice Dabashi's (2015: 33) assertion that we need to shift the geography of thinking all over the world, he rebukes Europe for its universal imposition of itself on the global south and notes that the global south is now speaking for itself from its own position. Europeans, he adds, have every right to be Eurocentric as that is their point of reference and that every scholar located in the global south should also practice "self-centrism" in order to advance scholarship from Europe's 'others'. The three chosen intellectuals prove thinking and speaking from one's positionality, even on Black Twitter is a worthy task regardless of how the neo-colonial world problematises you.

6.3 The Black Woman and the problem of thought

The Black woman, as posited above, is largely absent in the intellectual sphere. This is not due to a lack of Black women's of intellectual activity but the deliberate ignorance of said intellectual work in the westernised university and neo-colonial society. In the previous sections, I examined the Black woman and the act of speaking and whether or not she has an audience if she does, on Black Twitter and elsewhere. In this section, I question the shadow of complete ignorance that is cast on the thoughts of the Black woman and why this is so. Why does the world continue to ignore the Black woman when she thinks? Why does the world appropriate her work if it is of no value? The answer to this is simple, if the Black woman is given any intellectual space to express her thoughts; she puts the whole world on trial. She asks questions that no one is ready to willing to entertain yet she asks difficult questions that question humanity itself.

I argue that the problem is not her inability to think, the problem is the response of the world when she does think. If we agree that she is the mother of all humanity; which later turned its back on her then surely said humanity does not want to be confronted with her grief as her grief puts the world in perspective. Beal (2008) noted that, in the racist-capitalist system under which we live, has led to wilful ignorance of the Black woman's experience in the world. In this way, the system prevents the Black woman from thinking through femininity on her own positionality, instead it pushes her to fit into an already designated model of femininity that stresses the unattainable and undesirable 'white womanhood' leading the Black woman on a life-long chase of the impossible.

Truth (1851) puts the world on trial when she asks 'ain't I woman?', because she is not allowed the same luxuries of being at home with the children while the man goes out to make a living. She toils and tumbles right alongside him. In the field or the master's house she gets no rest. She takes the whip when the master deems it right and even his penis when he rapes her at night. Her children are the property of the master who can dispose of them anytime; unlike those of the 'madam'. She is forced to leave her suckling baby to feed the madam's infant as the madam engages in self-care and social events; the Black woman does not have such luxury. The Black

woman is the mirror; she lays her body on the line so that society, both Black and white is forced to stare at itself. Because she has been exposed to the worst cruelty possible, she is able to decipher the advent/remnants of coloniality quickly.

Figure 6.8

Figure 6.9

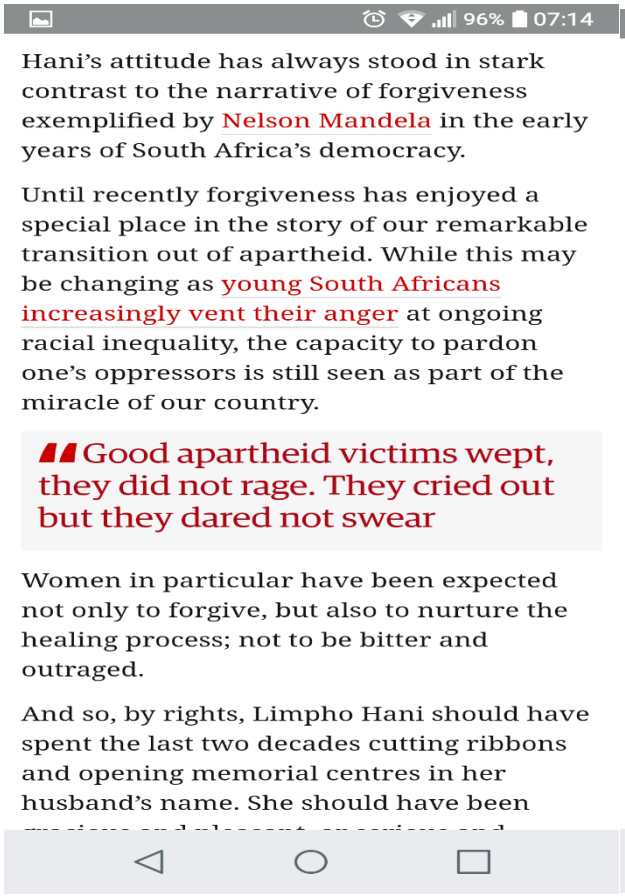


Figure 6.10

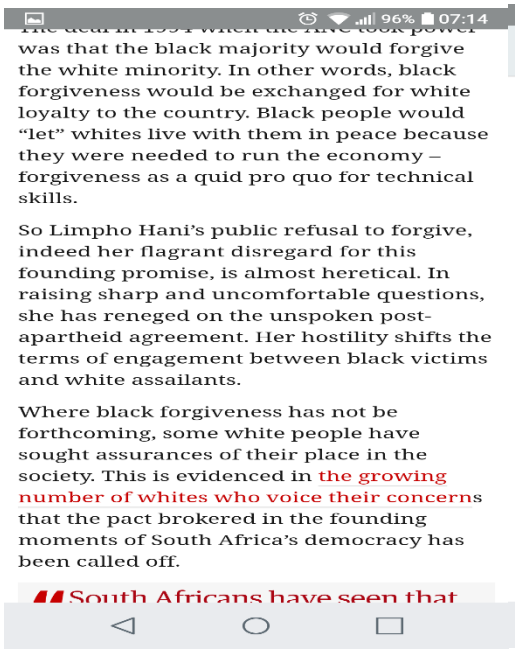


Figure 6.11

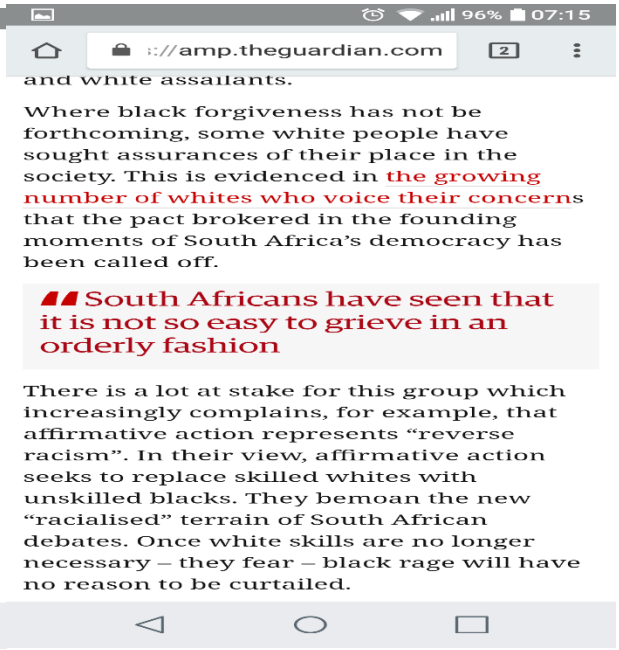


Figure 6.12

Figure 6.13

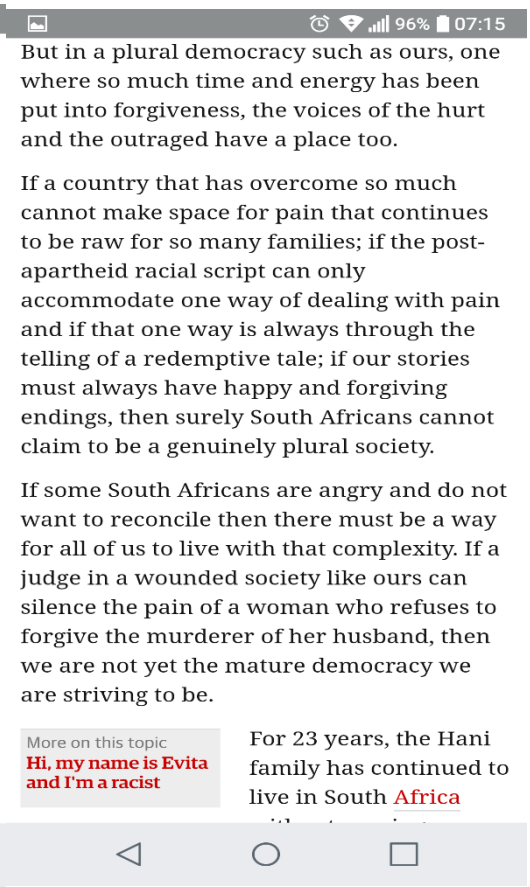


Figure 6.14

Figure 6.15

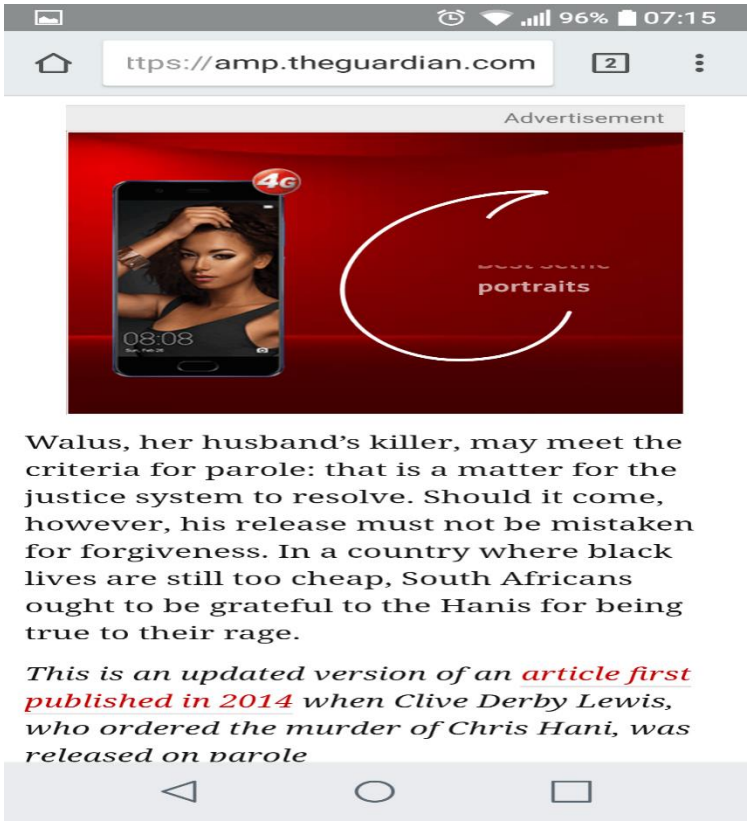


Figure 6.16

Msimang is an author-gender activist-columnist, she typically expresses her thoughts though opinions pieces, books and articles. In this riveting piece above (*Figure 6.8 to 6.16)*, she positions the pain of Mrs Limpho Hani, the wife of slain apartheid struggle hero Chris Hani as the pain of every Black South African. In the past two years, Mrs Hani has been in the news over the parole of her husband's killer because she did something unfathomable for Black people; she refused to forgive the murderer of her husband. The country gasped in utter shock at the thought of this woman saying something so 'unAfrican'. Msimang makes us think differently about Mrs Hani's protest; she positions the acts of 'Black people forgiving' solely as one of the products of domination. Black people are expected to, called upon and urged to forgive their oppressors in place of justice; Msimang puts the TRC on trial for how it absolved the whole community and some perpetrators without considering the emotional trauma of the many blacks who lost lives, limbs and loved ones. The TRC and the subsequent rainbow nation practically barred people like Mrs Hani from swearing, raging, feeling the pain of loss and when they seek this safe space today they are told they make white people uncomfortable. The world is not ready to let the Black woman think or speak for her thoughts are problematic. They are uncomfortable.

The act of thinking is an act of war where the Black woman is concerned, when she asks questions she puts her body on the line and she must be aware that the anti-Black world will militate. When the world militates and uses its anti-blackness against her, it not only to question her ability to think, the validity of her thoughts but ultimately her humanity. Mazwai is known for her controversial views on issues, such that most times Black Twitter does not agree with her and ostracises her as the lone voice that means nothing and should be paid any mind. She has never let this get in her way. When she tweets about the poisoning of Black communities, through food, water, medicines, pesticides and general living conditions *(Figure 6.18)*; she gets labelled an extremist by those who do not want to confront these realities.

She is seen as even more insulting when she attempts to equate 'Black Death' during slavery and colonisation *(Figure 6.19)* and the white death that is formally termed 'the holocaust'. She does not realise that she is in fact comparing the deaths of humans proper to the deaths of mere animals. Mazwai takes things further by asserting that we are still colonised in *(Figure 6.17)*, she touches the nerve of rainbow-nationalists, Black and white liberals and the neo-colonial world who view colonisation as an event with a start and an end. The act of her expressing her views in this manner is tantamount to a declaration of war. Mazwai is believer in the notion that for as long as the country's wealth, land and economic sector in the hands of the white settler minority that we are in fact colonised.

Figure 6.17

Figure 6.18

Figure 6.19

For those on the underside of modernity, those who live in the zone of nonbeing; coloniality has not ceased nor has it left them be. They still suffer the remnants of colonial domination, albeit the system not being official anymore. The colonial system that usurped the resources, labour, and humanity of the oppressed also took their identity. It left them in a state of limbo where they either hang in the balance of not quite resembling their colonial masters well enough and not being able to fully return to themselves as the memory of who they are fades with every generation. Hope (1975) asserts that, the only thing worse than being a (white) woman in the 19th century was being a 'nigger', she denotes the invisibility of the (white) woman as being the worst kind of infringement on her rights. That she was relegated to being a mere extension of the white man, she was never afforded the opportunity to decide for herself what it means to exist in her own body but she was a figment of the white man's imagination. She was meant to act and behave as he sees fit and publicly represent him as best as possible. Of course for Hope (1975), the tragedy of the actual 'nigger' or worse still; the 'nigger woman' does not dawn; neither does her contribution as a white woman to this tragedy. Hope (1975) only knows that, the white woman must fight so that she does not become a 'nigger' someday.

Figure 6.20

Both Dana *(figure 6.20)* and Mazwai realise the grave impact of strategy employed by colonial-apartheid in distorting, changing, concealing and indeed stealing the identity of the oppressed. While Mazwai is concerned about the economy as liberation, Dana puts much emphasis on the colonisation of identity. This includes the demonization of everything 'non-white', the appropriation and changing of culture, and the costume-like adoption of blackness by whiteness. For as Biko (2004) argues, it is easier to oppress a man who has lost himself; who is shadow of his former self because he will not fight. He in fact has nothing to fight for. Both artists are staunch Africanists who believe in the revival of the African way of life and its accompanying values. These values are seen as reclamation of the African identity that was crudely uprooted by colonial-apartheid. The majority Black South African population has muzzled into silence since 1994 when the dream of a rainbow nation was sold as the solution to the country's visible racial divide. Many still cannot bear to face the true reality of persistent coloniality and its effect on the oppressed blacks, having artists who are in the public eye talk about these issues so freely and frequently is unheard of. This is the Black woman's burden of thought.

6.4 The Phallic Shadow

Above I discussed in detail the manner in which the Black woman is not just denied space to intellectualise from her position but also how African society has adopted and perfected patriarchal ways of being from the West. These western ways influence the reception and employment of African women as thinkers, producers and custodians of knowledge. Above and beyond these challenges, the Black woman is forcibly concealed behind the phallic shadow which subdues her thinking, minimises and takes

ownership of her struggles. Federici (2004) explains with perfection the manner in which the hunting down and burning of witches was a deliberate act to consolidate white men's power and diminish the (white) woman into obscurity, inferiority and fear. One of the tenets of this period not only for the witches but for other women was forced dependence on men for everything. From menial activities like sitting outside their own homes, to walking in the street, to owning property; women had to have a male partner/companion. In this vein then, any significant contributions that women could have made were stifled by the oppressive nature of patriarchy. Any contributions that women did make to the world were illegitimately attributed to their different male companions/partners leading to a spread in the beliefs of the inferiority of women. Since then, the achievements of, especially Black women tend to be minimised into purely bodily existence. A Black woman may be as accomplished as any man and still be reduced to the some of her bodily parts or who she dates.

One can clearly see this misogyny where tennis player Serena Williams is concerned, bar all her achievements; the world seems fixated on the size of her thighs, the grotesqueness of her bum and the sexuality of her screams during heated matches. Not only is Williams at a disadvantage because she is woman, she is also a Black woman meaning she suffers a double blow. She is subjugated because she is a woman, but also because she is not a white woman. She not as perfect, innocent and pristine as her competitor Sharapova, who embodies not only perfect body parts but the right amount of submissiveness needed to make her man comfortable.

Closer to home, the inauguration of South Africa's 5th president, Cyril Ramaphosa has seen his otherwise private wife thrust into the spotlight as the first lady of the country. Many did not know a lot about the new First Lady so Black Twitter began to pose questions as soon as the president was inaugurated. A brief description of her qualifications and experience quickly popped up, before this however, the fact that she was older sister to billionaire Patrice Motsepe and of course her husband was used to describe her. Many questioned the motive behind foregrounding her brother and husband and not her personal accomplishments. This is no surprise in a society that has built the association of a woman to a man into its value system, in the form of a husband or life partner regardless of the toxicity of that relationship. When one observes the manner in which Dr Mamphele Ramphele, struggle icon and Black

Consciousness activist is reported; she tends to be captioned as Steve Biko's girlfriend and the mother of his child. The media does this to respond to an audience that does not know her personal accomplishments but require such biographical information in order to place her. This then leads to a vicious cycle where she continues to be reduced to a girlfriend and mother although she has personally done a lot of good outside of these roles.

Figure 6.21

This logic expectedly reared its head at the passing of Mama Winnie Madikizela Mandela, when many simply collapsed her into the legacy of Madiba as though she did not have any agency outside of him *(Figure 6.21).* The insinuations that, her sole mandate as a Black woman was keeping Madiba's name alive during his absence is extremely insulting if not ahistorical. She has declared many times that she was a political and active figure in her own right, who sometimes disagreed with her husband's politics because she was thinker and liberator on her own. I want to make it clear that my goal here is not to separate the Black woman from her man, I have argued against this logic from the start but I seek disband the white western logic that women cannot think outside of men. This logic is foreign to us and should never be

given the time of day. Dana and the whole of Black Twitter springs into action to defend the legacy of a woman revered by so many.

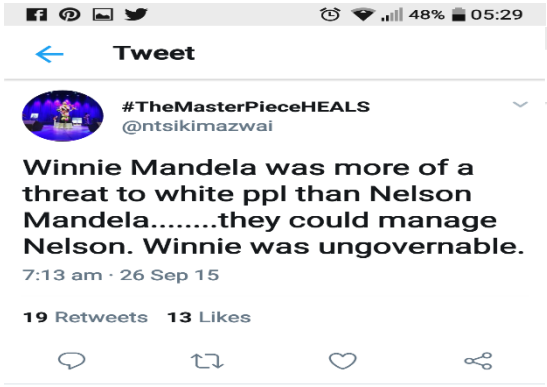


Figure 6.21

Figure 6.22

Mazwai *(Figure 6.21 to 6.22)* has been doing this work since time immemorial, especially where Mama Winnie is concerned; at the risk of alienating many who have glorified Madiba since during the struggle days. She has expressed disappointment at what she calls “selling Black people out” for fame and fortune. Mazwai claims to be a feminist and perhaps moves from this logic many a times; she does however tend to play to the crowd where this feminism is concerned. She does the kind of separationist work that pits the two genders against each other; she is not to be blamed as that is the most common of feminist logic in the country. Perhaps this also stems from her much publicised sexual assault ordeal which can understandably lead to a lack of trust in the opposite sex, especially one who is black.

Figure 6.23

She is however, not naïve to the power of white supremacy and all its structures. She is fully aware of how it separates and demonises Black people who fight for Black liberation *(figure 6.23)*, which is where she finds difference with Madiba's integrationist politics. She constantly argues that, anybody who gains the favour of the white establishment is not to be trusted by Black people for they have already sold out. Taking the ideology from the famous Samora Machel quote' of the same nature which suggests that, any Black person who truly fights for Black liberation will not be liked or celebrated by the current white supremacist establishment and all its structures. The lesson here is that, the Black woman need not aspire to be the white woman for there is nothing to learn from being a white woman. When she seeks this kind of recognition, the Black woman gets cast into the phallic shadow as the white woman. For in western logic, that is where his woman belongs hence the Black woman must exist there too. But this does not work for the Black woman for her body knows that is not where she belongs and it rebels against that space. She knows her power for her remembers having it and yearns to have it back. She knows that the Black man is not her competition, nor her rivalry; he will not give her power back but as her partner he should help her in the process as she helps him. That is the Ying-Yang logic upon which this relationship is based.

6.5 In praise of a witch

Historically, the West has oppressed and sought to destroy 'thinking' and 'speaking' women. The act of performing the most basic human activities was at one time frowned upon, at another point downright dangerous. Federici (2004) argues that, the expansion of capitalism not only had dire consequences for the global south, through Europe's thirst for Black bodies as slaves but also for European women who became the savages of Europe. The growing power of white male power, caused by the exploitation and oppression of others nurtured a sadistic need in them to preserve their gendered power at all costs, even at the cost of the women in their communities who threatened them. Through the 16th and 17th centuries, women's labour and social statuses came under immense attack as a means to 'tame' women and keep them in their designated place. This becomes not only a social and economic project but a literary project also, with Shakespeare's 'The Taming of the Shrew' (1593) used as a manifesto of the age. White men went as far as parading women who were deemed

to have a ‘sharp tongue’ in a contraption called the ‘bridle’, a headpiece made of iron used to shut a woman up and walk her on a leash like an animal (Federici 2004). Through this exercise, white women began to equate being opinionated and outspoken with immediate danger. During this period, legislation was passed that ensured the continued dependence of women on men everyday of their lives. They could not be seen in public without a male companion, be it their father, brother or husband. They were discouraged from sitting outside their homes alone or standing near their windows. Women were also instructed not to spend time with their female friends for fear of them ‘gossiping’, a term which acquired a negative connotation around this time. This was a deliberate attempt at isolation, to curb the sharing of ideas, thoughts and experiences. This would ensure that women’s progress was regulated and only went as far as the men approved.

After marriage, women were discouraged from visiting their parents often, especially without their husband. This way, a woman who was unhappy in marriage was being abused or needed help could not divulge such information to her family. This was psychological warfare, used to destroy women’s inner being. Women were expelled from waged jobs, all of these leading to legal and economic infantilisation (Federici 2004). A woman with no financial stability was more likely to remain dependant and indebted to her husband, she would do nothing to displease him. The trends that emerge from this period are said to have maximised the differences between men and women, creating and highlighting more feminine and masculine prototypes. It also established and cemented the notion that, women were inherently inferior to men, ‘emotional, lusty, unable to govern themselves and had to be placed under male control’.

The vilification of women garnered consensus from all spheres of society, from religious leaders to respected intellectual, from the pulpit to written pages; women were accused of being unreasonable, vain, wild and wasteful. A disobedient wife could be positioned as ‘scold’, a ‘witch’, or a ‘whore’ and these could lead to her ostracisation. Women became increasingly relegated to so called unwaged ‘female tasks’ like child baring, cooking and house-keeping. Women who deviated from these were publicly ridiculed, harassed, punished and sometimes sexually assaulted. Grosfuguel (2013: 85) posits this period as a “genocide/epistemicide” similar to the

burning of book libraries in indigenous and Muslim communities. He argues that, although this genocide/epistemicide tends to be forgotten in history compared to other genocides, the murder of Indo-European women was necessary to advance the "modern/ colonial capitalist/ patriarchal power structures". Indo-European women were a threat to the male-centric, Christian-centric, church authoritarian state because they possessed knowledge that men did not and therefore could not allow them to spread. These women possessed and mastered knowledge from ancient times and they passed it down orally from one generation to the next. Their knowledge covered broad arears such as astronomy, medicine, biology and ethics to name a few. Unlike the epistemicide in the Muslim world, or the theft of books from the University of Timbuktu, Indo-European women passed their knowledge down the generations orally so the only way to dispose of the knowledge was to burn the women with all their knowledge.

From this background, it is clear that women who 'know', 'speak', 'think', 'do' and those who just 'be' have historically been and are contemporarily unacceptable in a world that forces them into silence. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the colonial expansion ensured that these warped Western values were carried to the colonies and therefore changed communities in the global south forever. I argue that the eroding of woman's power, influence, and social status arrived in Africa and much of the colonised world on ship with colonisers. I do not seek to romanticise Africa or any of the colonised world, surely there were challenges that were unique to these communities but Oyewumi (1997, 2018) shows us that, they were quite different to those of white western women. This is mainly so because Africa has never legislated the economic, social and psycho-emotional infantilisation of its women until the arrival and forced transformation of the continent and its culture. The Indo-European witch-hunt-burning was indeed a state sanctioned project that propped up the current capitalist society and the proletariat (Fredereci 2004).

I praise the witch, the woman who knows, speaks, thinks, and does unapologetically. The woman, who puts her body on the line to pave a way and carve knowledge for future generations, The Black woman, whose world limits her body but she protests anyway. These are women who speak truth to power whichever community it comes from. The subordination of women is an inherently capitalist, patriarchal, racist and

modern project that seeks to preserve the power of rich white males in a world that is clearly shifting on its axis. I say this to mean, the hunting and burning of women facilitated the supremacy of the white male not only in their community but in Black and brown communities equally. This manifests itself in the witch trials where the inferiority and dependence of women on men becomes enshrined in the relationship between the witches and the devil. Federici (2004) noted that, in medieval times, the devil was portrayed as merely a mischievous, do-bad minor magician whose little powers could be defeated with some holy water or a cross in hand. The 'witch' trials changed this image and made the devil a powerful entity that controlled the witches' actions; they were wholly dependent on him and could not disobey him. The devil had sexual intercourse with the witches and he could change their names at will. These new derivatives come from the transcriptions of the torture confessions of witches submitted by the interrogators and they change the relations between and women forever.

They make the man the most powerful being in control of the weak, misbehaving woman. The genocide/epistemicide on Indo-European women had catastrophic consequences for everyone who the "other" of white western men in the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries as it led to intensity of their oppressive and murderous ways (Grosfuguel 2013: 86). This epistemicide created racial/patriarchal power dynamics on a world scale coupled with capitalist accumulation. White western men began to view themselves as not only the centres of the universe but also its saviours, they fashioned themselves out to have God-like abilities to know everything about everything and be able to rule over everyone. They began to universalise themselves, their ways of knowing and their ways of being and provincialised the rest of the world. Through this process, everyone who fit into the prototype of white western male was relegated to 'zone-of-non-being'.

The epistemicide of knowledge from other parts of the world facilitated the inferiorisation of not only these knowledge but people other than white, male and European. Black and brown peoples of the world and women are positioned as irrational and unthinking (Grosfuguel 2013: 87). Mazwai, Dana and Msimang belong to a race of people who have lived in the zone of non-being for centuries, have been subjected to dehumanisation, slavery, colonisation, rape, dispossession and multiple

oppressions. Not only are they Black and representing the epitome of ‘otherness’, they are also women (Black women) thereby are at the bottom of the food chain where knowledge recognition is concerned. Seeing that they defy all colonial imposed silencing techniques, Dana, Mazwai and Msimang would most likely be in the ‘bridle’ described by Federici (2004) or worse, dead. They would have been labelled witches for defying all the logic of the organisation of superiority-inferiority of humanity and for having any opinion instead of adhering to their low-order place in the world.

6.6 Conclusion

This chapter has positioned the Black woman as a thinker, producer and distributor of knowledge; not only currently but historically. I have situated Dana, Mazwai and Msimang as women who are confronted with condition of their people and therefore use Black Twitter to voice their concerns, to do the work of activism; they speak against oppression and racism. This chapter used Dabashi (2015) as a base upon which the Black woman is examined, ‘can the Black woman think’? I have argued here that, the Black woman has been thinking for centuries, but much like her speaking; she does not have a space in the westernised university so she gets ignored. I then posited that the intellectual work of the Black woman tends to be associated with the men in her life in some way or another, either by her being labelled by a man as if she were his property, or her work being credited to a man all together. This, I have termed the ‘phallic shadow’. The phallic shadow continues the exclusion of Black women in the westernised society and encourages the racist-sexist notion that she cannot think. I have attempted to link Dabashi (2015) as intellectualising while Spivak (2010) in the previous chapter question the recognition of the Black woman’s humanity, because she who is not restored to humanity to speak also cannot be perceived as a thinker. However, I posit that Black women have found alternative ways of speaking and thinking although they are ignored in mainstream discourse. They use Black Twitter, a space for ‘black-speak’ to assert themselves as intellectuals who think and speak through blackness. They assert themselves as champions in the liberation of their people.

CHAPTER 7: AIN'T I LIBERATION?

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I examine the concept of liberation from the point of view of the ultra-subalternised, the Black woman. What does it mean for the Black woman to be conceptualised as a problem? How does it feel to watch your people taken in boats to foreign lands to be worked day and night without compensation? How does it feel to lose everything your ancestors have preserved for you for centuries to a small foreign minority? What does it mean to desire true liberation for she who is denied humanity and self-determination? This chapter begins first by examining the cry of the oppressed. I situate this cry as a voiceless expression of pure despair that cannot be understood by he who has not lived in the Black body. I argue that, at first glance, the native sees the only escape out of the pain of her body as whitening herself. The Black woman has served front and centre in the struggle for liberation, upon realisation of the betrayal of 'democracy', she begins to weep, and then scream and then she lets out a mumbled cry.

I posit here that, the Black woman has known dignity, respect and self-sufficiency; for had she not, she would not be so painfully seeking it. I situate the cry of the Black woman for her people in song, particularly 'Thina Sizwe' and 'Senzeni na'? With these songs, the native expresses the loss of a belonging that is so deeply desired that tears no longer come out of her eyes. Secondly, I position the chosen intellectuals as diligent fighters who seek true liberation for the oppressed. They use song, spoken word, written word and Black Twitter to 'do activism'. Thirdly, I situate the chosen intellectuals in the struggle for liberation from all forms of oppression. These intellectuals fight against racism, sexism and classism with the same vigour. I assert here that, feminist thought needs to be customised to the struggles of Black women as at this moment, it is not as inclusive as one would hope. With this in mind, I posit that, there is no Black liberation without the return of stolen land to its native owners. The chosen intellectuals articulate place the Black struggle in land, not viewed in the capitalist fashion of commodity but a sense of 'home, belonging and ancestry'.

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7.2 The Phenomenology of the Cry

This section situates the Black 'cry' in a world that snuffs out, suffocates, and strangles Blackness. I try here, to explain not only the manner of, but the reason for this cry. The Black 'cry' as a manner of communication, comes from a deep-rooted place in the souls of Black folk; signals a want, a longing for the humanity that is no longer at reach to Black people. In the world of the 'you' as diagnosed by Fanon ([1952] 2008), multiple forms of being can be observed. Different kinds of man, of knowing, of existing, and of thinking flourish side by side devoid of the prejudice of hierarchy. This world, the world of plural existence has been denied to the Black who has been relegated to a place of the non-human, in most instances less than animal thereby inspiring the formation of the Black 'cry'. The question I seek to answer here is 'what does the cry mean for one who has been denied all freedoms, liberties and humanity?' In articulating the phenomenology of the cry, Maldonado-Torres (2008) begins with Fanon's fundamental probing question of trying to ascertain 'what it is that the Black wants'.

Fanon ([1952] 2008) answers this question by positing that the black, who is inherently made a slave, 'wants to be like the master'. The Black wants to be white, for that is the ultimate measure of 'human' in the current world order. This is not to assert that, the Black wants to copy the human behaviours of the white man by any means, but the Black wants to be white in as far as the white man is treated with respect and recognition the world over. The world order as we know it, has made it so that the concept of humanity is directly correlated with whiteness so as to ensure that the black's ultimate goal is that of inclusion and assimilation into the master's kind of life, whether this life is attainable of not (Maldonado-Torres 2008).

What keeps the world going in this case therefore, is the constant chase that blacks engage in which keeps them occupied with activities that have nothing to do with their emancipation but with whiteness. Because 'Black skins will never whiten', therefore, they never attain humanity; blacks are frustrated into finding ways of expressing their pain. For when one seeks a constantly moving target they, over time become infuriated and may begin to be angry, then enraged, then saddened to the point of weeping, only then will they start to cry the kind of cry that cannot be categorised for it stems from

within. This cry expresses a pain that cannot be put in words, it so intricate that it transcends weeping and rage and demands internalised meditations about the Black condition from those who live it. The Black condition in the world as we know it is basically a non-condition, as Blackness is the essence of ultimate absence, the absence of humanity, liberty, dignity and freedom. What the Black is then forced to do is see the representation of humanity as whiteness, and so he sees his mission as that of being white; as he cannot change the colour of his skin he then seeks assimilation, integration and inclusion. All of these are granted on condition that the Black lose himself as much as possible. Echoing Fanon's ([1952] 2008) sentiments, Maldonado-Torres stresses that, "in the colonial context what happens at the level of the private and intimate is fundamentally linked to social structures and to colonial cultural formations and forms of value".

This is to say human to human relation; communication relationships with the self are infected by the colonial virus and are therefore transformed into those we do not recognise. The Black man is not just a man but is man in comparison to the white man who holds power; the same is said for the Black woman. Fundamentally, this lack of recognition, or the world of the self, of humanity in general and of the 'Other' ignites the 'cry'. Maldonado-Torres (2008:127) gracefully posits that, "for one to know that they are being disrespected, they must have known respect". For one to know that their humanity has been collapsed and undermined, they must have known humanity. For one to know that they have no liberty and freedom, they must have known liberty and freedom. The frustration at the loss of these fundamental tenets of humanity ignites the 'cry'. In its various forms, Black South Africans have cried before and continue to cry today as seen in spiritual meditations in song:

Thina Sizwe

Thina sizwe, thina sizwe esintsundu,
Sikhalela izwe lethu
Elathathwa ngabamhlophe
Mabayeke umhlaba wethu
Mabayeke umhlaba wethu

Abantwana be-Afrika
Bakhalela i-Afrika
Elathathwa ngabamhlophe
Mabayeke umhlaba wethu
Mabayeke umhlaba wethu

Thina sizwe, thina sizwe esintsundu,
Sikhalela izwe lethu

Elathathwa ngabamhlophe
Mabayeke umhlaba wethu
Mabayeke umhlaba wethu.

The song ‘Thina Sizwe,’ laments deep feelings of loss, loss of belonging, of humanity, of value and dignity. The lyrics paint a picture of coloniality, a state of affairs in which the Black is dispossessed of everything. The song bases the cry on land, it clearly states that, it was taken by the white man and warns that he must leave our land alone. Although this might sound like the Black seeks ownership of land in the same way as do westerners, I will explain in a subsequent section how this is far from so. The land, in these lyrics, represents a loss of everything that is sacred; spirituality, humanness, belonging, humanity, dignity, ancestral grounds that house our fallen ancestors. The song is meditative in nature and speaks to a part of the soul that lies so deep within, that it touches the trauma of the living dead, the living and yet to be born. It signals the responsibility of the Black to a cause much bigger than the here and now, a cause that calls for responsible rebellion that ensures the continuity of humanity and not the destruction thereof.

The Black therefore, does not cry for ownership or possession but cries for the restoration of all that is good, for the reversal of all that is evil and a world that can accommodate all who live in it and in which they all feel a sense of belonging. The song continues to warn the white to leave ‘us’ alone, if one pays close attention, one sees the message that span generations in just one line. The Black wants to determine for herself what Blackness means, and wants to be left alone to do just that. The white man has brought evil to shores of the peaceful, has oppressed and dehumanised the peaceful for centuries. In this song, the Black is warning the white man that, as Biko (2004) clearly posits at some point, we will say; ‘we have nothing to lose’ and take what is ours back at all costs. We will no longer ask for dignity, we will take it, we will not ask for humanity, or power, or land, or dignity, or even respect but we will take. For at that point, we will have nothing to lose; the song shows us that our ancestors have thought, they have left messages littered everywhere so that we are never at a loss. It is the duty of the white man to decipher the message while he still has time to restore his own humanity that he lost to savagery, cruelty and depravity.

Figure 7.1

Dana gave a touching rendition of the song '*Thina Sizwe*' at one of the many memorial services hosted to honour Mama Winnie Madikizela-Mandela when she passed. Black Twitter was abuzz at the pain this song still carries for them and many generations before them *(Figure 7.1)*. Dana, as many have called her, is a vessel on stage. When she sings, she speaks the pain and dreams of our ancestors and fallen soldiers. When she sang this song, you could cut the palpable Black pain with a knife. Although at the time this song was under a veil of critique, with the white community displaying its usual fragility every time Black people speak of their pain. There were numerous calls to ban this song, claiming it is racist. Black Twitter took the passing of Mama Winnie, a seasoned advocate for the return of stolen land, as a space to share, sing, write and enforce the sentiments of this song as the unfulfilled promise of 'freedom', the biggest betrayal of 1994 and Mandela's rainbow nation.

Senzeni na
Senzeni na senzeni na
Senzeni na senzeni na

Senzeni na senzeni na
Senzeni na kulomhlaba?
Amabhunu azizinja
Amabhunu azizinja
Amabhunu azizinja
Amabhunu azizinja
Kuyisono 'kubamnyama
Kuyisono 'kubamnyama
Kuyisono 'kubamnyama
Kuyisono kulelizwe

Senzeni na?
Sono sethu, ubumnyama?
Sono sethu yinyaniso?
Sibulawayo
Mayibuye i Africa

The song 'Senzeni na'? asks fundamental questions about the Black non-condition spoken of above. When closely examined, one can see first intrusions of Christianity in the struggle for liberation in the lyrics which signal the composition of the song after the conversion of the so called 'native' into the Christian religion. You see this clearly when the composer asks, 'what is our sin? Is being Black our sin'? as if asking 'God'. The composer asks time and time again 'what have we done? Is being truthful our sin'? showing traces of self-blame for the system of oppression observed. For if we have committed sin by being black, or being truthful, Christianity teaches that we can undo this by repenting and NOT being what is sinful. Unlike the cue assimilation, denegrification and integration, perpetuated until post-94 South Africa.

The song shows traces of revolutionary spirit that, although draped in Christian self-flagellation, still proclaims that 'Boers are dogs'. That line can be interpreted to mean that the Boer behaves in ways that are tantamount to an animal and that we do not recognise them as 'human'. This is not to equate the white to a dog in humanness specifically, but to behaviour that is outside of the human realm as is dictated to us by the principles of Ubuntu. Because of his treatment of Other, we can effectively say 'umlungu akangomntu'. These cries are both messages to generations of the oppressed, to understand their oppressor in the process of their meditation. These songs, although incredibly painful, are also healing. They allow an outpouring of love for self, a love that seems so far from reach, a love for humanity and the recognition of a wound. At close examination, one sees that, Black Twitter, for all its good deeds, is but a collection of Black bodies engaged in periodic, reactionary rage and noise. That is not to discount the good that comes out of Twitter movements, or to blame the

movement itself for its condition. This is instead to caution its members about how the anti-Black world keeps blacks occupied with minor incidents of racism to distract them from their systemic oppressions. One cannot blame Black people, and by extension Black Twitter for being enraged at the Black non-condition. However, the rage, in post-94 South Africa has not yet materialised into a cry as we saw during the heated years of colonial-apartheid. Not only is the rage of Black Twitter counter-productive and distracting; it also appears to give a much needed kick to the anti-Black world. The visible commotion of the orchestrated anger of millions of Black bodies gives the anti-Black world the feeling of control, that at every little prick the blacks will behave in the exact way they are expected. Once the euphoria of the rainbow nation has thoroughly worn off, it is then that Black Twitter will cease the rage, the weeping and the noise and look within; to find the cry that will inspire the fulfilment of the ancestral wish. Only then will the proclamation of 'Thina Sizwe' be realised, when blackness is left alone to redefine itself not for the 'other' but for itself.

7.3 On Unapologetic Black Liberation

Since the inception of European's assault on the indigenous populations of the global South, the struggle against imperialism and colonisation has been evident on all corners of the Black world. As if addressing South Africans just yesterday, Carmichael (1966: 642) noted, "negroes are defined by two forces, their blackness and their powerlessness". Society, as he observed then, is characterised by two completely differently communities. One is the white community that controls and defines the manner in which all social institutions should run and the Black community that has been excluded in all power decisions that shaped said society. The Black community has traditionally been forced to depend upon, and be subservient to the white community. As explained above, this social order comes to be as a result of violent dehumanisation and colonisation. This order is then maintained through institutionalised means of oppression that keep the Black community in its condition of dependence and inferiority (Carmichael 1966: 643). Carmichael (1966: 645) cautions that, "major changes are necessary if humanity is to continue in a progressive trajectory, but how is it possible to bring these changes about"? Like Biko (2004), he argues that, simply integrating blacks into systems of being that are determined by white society will not change anything but will further alienate the Black community. Like Biko (2004), Carmichael (1966: 645) argues that, "the liberal policy of integration

simply serves to divide blacks by selecting a few ‘respectable’ blacks and elevating them so as to antagonise the whole community for not being able to get to the same place”. The call therefore, is for total Black liberation and for the realisation of a new human. The words liberation, emancipation and freedom have a special meaning for the Black community which has been under the boot of whites for far too long. On the question of Black liberation, Carmichael (1966) emphasises the notion that “Black people are worth fighting hard for”. This means that where necessary, violence must be used against a violent system if it means liberation for those it oppresses. Historically, Black people have been actively organising against their oppression in many varying ways, some have advocated peaceful resistant while others vouched for taking up arms not to initiate violence but to protect the community against white violence. This is as seen during the Black Power era of the 1950s which is inspired by and modelled after the Ghanaian resistance; ‘the Black Panther Party’ that protected Black leader and the community by carrying weapons to use when under threat. A movement that set out to unite Black people all over the world was the Black Power Movement.

This movement merged activism and intellectual production, seeking to liberate Black people from physical as much as psychological bondage. The Black Power Movement argued that social and political transformation required a critical and politically engaged community of Black scholar-activists (Joseph 2001: 3). The movement can be seen as a racial movement that focuses on a specific class of oppressed people, and not a racist movement that preaches ethnic/racial superiority. The movement called upon leaders in the Black community to carefully analyse politics and formulate strategies to alleviate the pressure off the community and its people. The movement quickly spread and became a slogan fuelling anti-colonial resistance in Ghana, Cuba, Congo and the Americas. The movement, encapsulated in the slogan, was meant to arouse in Black people the world over the desire to fight for their liberation and to, perhaps for the first time, see themselves as completely human, worthy and equal to others races. These kinds of movements tend to be termed ‘radical’ as they call for a complete overhaul and undoing of the socio-political sphere as we know it (Carmichael 1966), (Joseph 2001).

Scholar-activists in the Black community have based the Black Power and later Black Consciousness Movements on the primary need for the race to redefine for itself what it means to be ‘black’, to infuse this once derogatory term with pride, self-love and the ability to unite the oppressed. Biko (2004) and the South African wing of the movement conceptualised the term as one that would not only unite the oppressed and infuse them with self-pride, but one that would free the minds of the oppressed by dropping the then popular term ‘non-white’ for people of colour. This was a paradigm shift at the level of ideology as well as strategy and tactics, white racism depends on the blacks’ propagated inferiority so when BCM and BPM change this they change everything whiteness relies upon (Biko 2004; Gibson 1988; Joseph 2001).

Upon close observation, one can see that Black women were at centre stage of these movements; serving as leaders, soldiers, activists, fighters and strategists. Women like Rosa Parks ignited the fight against segregation, causing hundreds of thousands to stand up and call for justice. Mama Winnie Mandela was the life-blood of the movement for liberation until her death, she never wavered. This after she sacrificed so many of her life away from her children, detained as a result of her anti-apartheid activism. Black women like Angela Davis were and continue to be leaders in the movement, calling for total emancipation of the oppressed; recording blackness in word and deed.

Black Panther Party leader Assata Shakur has been exiled from her country of birth, not only for her activities in the movement but also for fighting against racism. Black women are the heart of the movement. However, one would be forgiven to believe that many of the Black movements we have seen so far have been purely male-centric and this is the narrative that is recorded in history. Because these Black women dealt not only with racism but also sexism without and without the movement, they tend to be excluded or silenced in the story. They appear as support for their male comrades but are never positioned as the leaders they were. It is only recently that other young Black women have begun to reclaim the rightful place of Black female activists in the history of the struggle. History has however, taught Black radical movements that radical Black thought, self-pride and the demand of liberation, for us comes with demonisation. For example, after all the violence blacks have had meted out on them by whites, they are still not expected to retaliate, to defend or to protect themselves.

The world as a whole has made of the Black a timid mule that should by design take beatings without so much as flinching let alone fighting back. This is evident in Malcolm X's call for blacks to seek liberation 'by any means necessary'. Although this was not an outright declaration of war, the oppressor viewed it as such and began to demonise the person and all thought associated with him. It is clear that any society that feels the pressure of being under the thumb of any other can and should use any means to free itself from that thumb, Umoja (1999: 133) explains in detail how 'repression breeds resistance'. It is a natural human reflex for anybody to defend their person and livelihood, but we have learnt throughout history that this right is but relative for blacks.

In the story of the Amistad, a slaver's ship that kidnaps men of the Mende nation in 1839 for enslavement in the USA is overtaken by the captives off the coast of Cuba resulting in the deaths of the ship's crew. The captives spare the lives of two Spanish crew members for the purpose of helping them sail back home where they kidnapped them. The Spaniards mislead the Mende men and instead sail to the United States, where they are stopped and captured by the American Navy, leading to the imprisonment of the captives as murderous runaway slaves. The Mende men go through three years of a court case trying to regain their freedom and go back home; the case is resolved by the US Supreme Court in 1841. During this period, the Mende and by extension all free and enslaved Africans are demonised, dehumanised, animalised and their pain of captivity minimised as the natural place of the African (Amistad 1997). These men and many other runaway captives are criminalised for running away from their captors, which sometimes culminated in fights and the death of either party. The Western world sends a clear message that Africans are not allowed the ontological right to fight for their freedom, to defend their person or to protect themselves.

The same trend is seen in the anti-colonial wars on the African continent, iMpi yaseNcome (The Battle of the Blood River) between the Zulu nation and the Boere tribe is conceptualised as savages attacking the innocent civilised white man. The 100 year Xhosa Wars (Cape Frontier Wars) when the Xhosa nation fought European invasion for a hundred years from 1779 to 1879 are historicised in the same way. This criminalisation and demonisation extends to the Civil Rights movement of the USA and anti-apartheid struggles of Southern Africa. At this point, white society not only

criminalises the movements themselves but leader in the Black community. This can be seen with BPM leader like Kwame Ture, Civil Rights advocate Malcolm X, BCM leader Steve Biko, Robert Sobukwe, Solomon Mahlangu, Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, Assata Shakur, Angela Davis, Sophia de Bruyn, Charlotte Maxeke, Zondeni Sobukwe and many others. The issue with these leaders was not necessarily incitement of war, or their possession of weapons, it was not even the amount of military they had behind them. The issue was their ability to shift the thinking of the oppressed, to free them from mental slavery and that was seen as a greater threat than any military strength. When oppressive forces worked hard to negate the being of the black, the leaders served the opposite purpose, that of affirming blackness (Gibson 1988: 6). However, due to white society perceiving Black struggles through their own lens, it looked like these leaders opposed white people and not the white supremacy that benefitted them. There is a clear difference.

Biko (2004) like Fanon ([1952] 2008), calls for the making of a new world, the quest for a new humanity where the Black will no longer be perceived as 'an extension of a broom' or a clog in a piece of machinery. Simply by making these basic demands, Biko gets demonised and criminalised (Gibson 1988: 7). The same trend continues with other Black leaders, to the extent where many are killed, tortured, jailed and labelled as terrorists. That is the warped logic of white supremacist oppression of the global south historically and presently. The recent (2018) passing of Mama Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, a renowned anti-apartheid activist and leader of Black South Africans who kept the movement alive while most of the ANC leader were jailed by the apartheid regime.

At the time of her passing, it was clear that the media and some sectors of the society were hell-bent on tarnishing her image through patriarchal, sexist and racist narratives of Mama Winnie. Her private life was splashed all over newspapers, questions of her sexual integrity while Tata Nelson Mandela was in jail crept up to the surface again. The country's usual dementia suddenly dissipated as everybody and their mother suddenly remembered the wrongs committed by Mama Winnie and how she must not remembered as a 'perfect person'. The situation got so pathetic that apartheid leaders like FW De Klerk offered half-baked comments on how Mama Winnie's reputation had

a ‘dark side’ to it. It was clearly open season on this fearless leader’s legacy, ‘it was time to protect it at all costs’ Black women on Black Twitter erupted in unison.

Figure 7.2

Sisonke Msimang *(Figure 7.3 to 7.4)*, among many others, wrote counter-narrative in articles to defend her legacy. Not only did the articles humanise her and her struggles, exposing lies that were paddled by the apartheid regime; they also exposed the racist-sexist nature of the media reports and the media as a whole. Black women worked tirelessly to formulate a new conversation about Mama Winnie and the liberatory work she did, the fear she instilled in the hearts of apartheid leader while keeping the movement alive.

Msimang’s work was published in Mail and Guardian as well as the Washington Post. The work to reclaim Mama Winnie had officially begun. The sexism began to raise its head again at this event; many insinuated that Mama does not deserve any accolades because she was ‘dishonourable’ woman. Many went out their way to emphasise that she ‘flawed and imperfect’. Some urged read closely about her drinking habits, all of these irrelevant to her liberatory work that people were acknowledging at the time of her death. Sexist ideology shows its face in that we rarely if ever hear such commentary when male struggle icons pass. They are allowed the space to be ‘layered’ individuals who tried their best while female icons are demonised.

Figure 7.3 ***Figure 7.4***

Media transparency and integrity has been placed under scrutiny by thousands of Black women for exhibiting the same tactics as the apartheid media by actively trying to discredit Mama, her pain and suffering as well the liberatory work she did under immense danger. This led to an unwritten pact that Black women must do the work of writing and telling their own stories if they seek freedom from racism, sexism and invisibilisation as the media clearly cannot be objective about us.

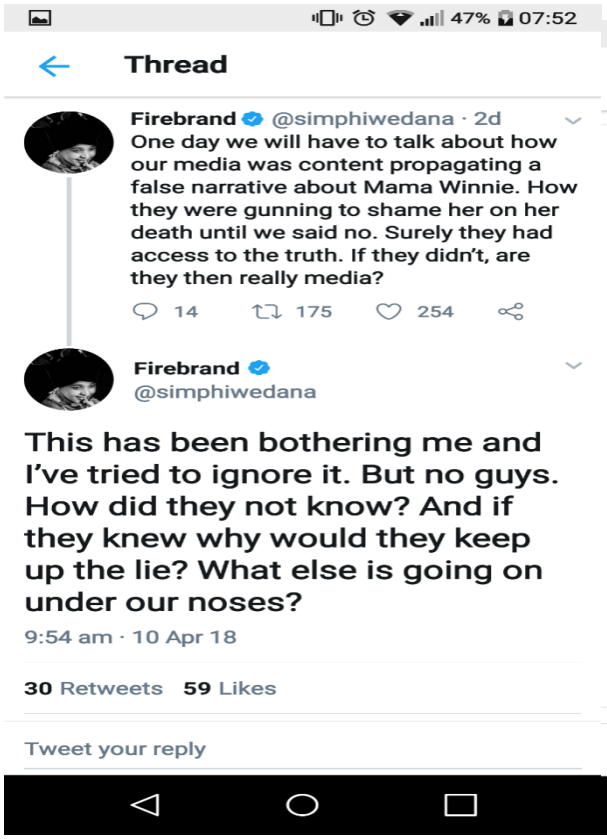

Figure 7.5 ***Figure 7.6***

In the wake of Black Women's activism which culminated in hashtag movements like #SheDidNotDieSheMultiplied and #AllBlackWithaDoek which saw Black women all over the country wearing Black and doeks to signify the mourning of a loved one. Suddenly and not accidently at all, the media narrative began changing, with true revelations of the falsehood of the allegations levelled against Mama by the oppressive regime. Suddenly, media practitioners of the time, intelligence officers and security police emerged to set the record straight. They confessed that they master-minded and orchestrated an intelligent media campaign against her in order to tarnish and demonise her. Dana (*Figure 7.5 to 7.6)* expressed deep disappointment at the manner in which our seemingly free media houses deliberately played along with those who tarnished Mama Winnie's image even after she passed. Many in the industry knew the truth, and yet they paddled the untrue stories until Black Twitter 'called them out' on the lies. It was only then that things changed.

Figure 7.7

Mama Winnie's legacy was hereby protected, the narrative was changed and deliberate misconceptions and misinformation exposed. Black women did the work, leaders came to the fore to shield them and provide their own historical knowledge *(Figure 7.7)*. This is not to claim victory or to assume that the misinformation will not be disseminated again, there are many who have believed it for decades but Black women can rest assured that they have begun a fundamental process of changing the manner in which they come to the world and how, in turn it will start to receive them.

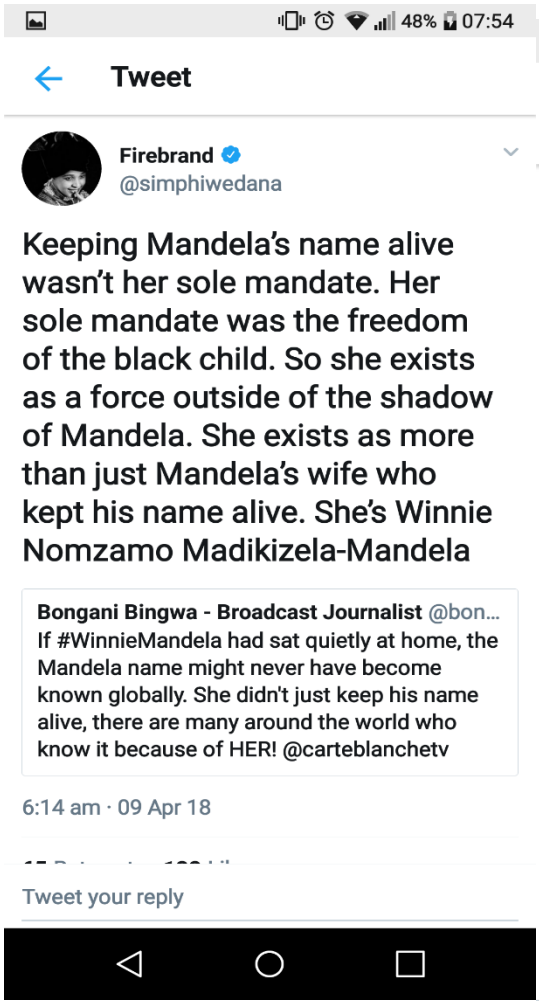

Figure 7.8

Figure 7.9

The passing of Mama Winnie demonstrates clearly that, not only is history present but it also remembers, it just chooses to forget where Black pain is concerned, more so if the subject is Black women (Cannon 187). The narrative that 'neither the oppressor is absolutely guilty, nor the enslaved absolutely guiltless' was on clear display during this period, proving that the world does not allow blacks to defend, protect or retaliate for their oppression. Black women showed us that heroes like Harriet Tubman, Afeni Shakur, Angela Davis, Mama Winnie Mandela, Charlotte Maxeke, Rosa Parks, Sophia de Bruyn, Noni Jabavu and many others do not die, they multiply. They showed us that even when means of protest have changed slightly, we are still inspired by the revolutionary spirit of those who have come before us. We will continue to fight radically against systems that oppress us.

7.4 Radical Feminism: Against sexism

This section positions the struggle for woman emancipation within the broader struggle for Black liberation. As I have discussed elsewhere, there have been various points of reckoning for the Black struggle; the abolition of slavery, decolonisation, the abolition of apartheid and 'democracy'. I argue throughout this study that none of these points of reckoning have yielded any true liberatory benefits for Black people and that more radical solutions are needed. The radicalisation and intensification of the Black struggle for liberation is linked directly with the radicalisation of Black women's struggle. Women's struggles have been articulated in different ways throughout the centuries however, at the core of all these struggles has been the demand for the complete emancipation of women and their right to self-determination. These different struggles all centre on doing away with the perception of women as an extension of men, as being 'for' men which has been the foundation of patriarchy (Rowland and Klein 1990: 9).

This logic has led to the reduction of women's bodies as commodities in the hands of men to do with as they please, which exacerbates the international trafficking of women and children, pornography and rape, thereby creating a skewed power balance that perpetuates violence against women and leaves women's bodies as international currency. Unlike other feminisms which have a strong and established intellectual base; radical feminism sets itself apart through its need to expand beyond just theory and intellect (Rowland and Klein 1990). It focuses it's thought not only on the sexual liberation of women, but also on the challenges of befriending women, on creative writing and arts; it centres itself as a theory of the emotional as well as the rational (Rowland and Klein 1990: 9).

Others may perceive the overlapping of the emotional and intellectual as a scandal, as other forms of feminisms tend to want to divorce women from their emotions because they have been used as a vehicle in their oppression. Radical feminism, on the other hand, uses these emotions as strengths; as it is these raw emotions that have inspired the works of feminists like Audre Lorde. Cocks (1987) asserts that the term 'radical' means 'pertaining to the root' and so radical feminism looks at the root of women's oppression and by extension a radical feminist is one who 'goes to the

root'. Cocks (1987) as quoted by Rowland and Klein (1990: 9) added that, "it is her belief that sexism is the root of oppression, the one which, until and unless we uproot it will continue to out force the branches of racism, class hatred, ageism, competition, ecological disaster and economic exploitation". In Cocks' (1987) logic, sexism is the beginning of all exploitation and the other forms mentioned herein emanate from it. Cocks (1984: 29) theorised in the same manner when she argued that all other forms of oppression appear gender-based oppression in historical times. She posits that other forms of oppression are indebted to the sex/gender system, either because they result from a habit men acquired from their initial subjugation of women, or because they function mainly to divide women against each other. Radical feminism, not much different from other feminisms, claims its revolutionary intent as woman-centeredness where women's experiences, emotions and interested are centred in theory and practice. It claims to be the only theory 'by and for women'.

On the same vein, Willis (1984: 91) posited that women who call themselves radical feminists see the primary goal of feminism as freeing women from the imposition of 'male values' and creating an alternative culture based on 'female values'. Cocks (1984: 29) asserts that radical feminism sometimes locates male power in men's biology- precisely, in the penis as a natural instrument of aggression, mastery and violence- and sometimes in women's biology, their relatively slight build and tier vulnerability while pregnant. This is to say, men deliberately use their biological advantage to advance sexist ways of relating to women. Willis (1984) adds that, "at inception, radical feminism began as a political movement to end male supremacy in all areas of social and economic life, and rejected the whole idea of opposing male and female natures and values as a sexist idea, a basic part of what we are fighting".

Radical feminists argue that, their theory and practice names 'all' women as part of an oppressed group, because in essence; no woman can walk down the street safely without fear of violation by men. Rowland and Klein (1990: 10) assert that, "because of its unapologetic nature, radical feminism has often been marginalised by mainstream feminism; which moved into a more comfortable libertarianism thereby stressing individualism rather than collective responsibility". From this point of view, radical feminism seems to speak directly to the needs of Black women who are marginalised by mainstream feminism. It is true that, the issue that all women in

general are confronted with is sexism however untrue. Black women are also faced with racism as a major component of their oppression. This is not given the attention it deserves in radical feminism. Rowland and Klein (1990: 10) seem to support Willis (1984: 92) in her claim that, "radical feminism coined revolutionary vocabulary like 'sisterhood is powerful' or 'the personal' is political". Willis (1984: 92) asserts that, "it was radical feminism that first sparked the drive to legalise abortion and, demand total equality in the private sphere- equal sharing of housework and childcare, equal attention to women's emotional and sexual needs". Radical feminists claim that they care not for male-acceptability; this is seen as the cause of the drift with other forms of feminist thought. Thinking through the concept of 'the personal is political', Ryan (2007) argues for the drawing of connections between women's experience and social reality. She adds that women must locate personal troubles in the structural/political realm as these are intertwined. Radical feminists argue vehemently that their theory is one that is for women, by women; it allows women to speak and fight for themselves unlike those from the 'left' who fight on behalf of someone else. Well known radical feminist Delphy (1980) famously argued:

We are not fighting for others, but for ourselves. We and no other people are the victims of the oppression which we denounce and fight against. And when we speak, it is not in the name or in place of others, but in our own name and in our own place.
Delphy (1980)

From this view, radical feminism stresses emancipation from and equality to their male counterparts and a total revolution of the social structures that enable sexism and patriarchy. It is true that all women are affected by sexism and that all women's movements are started specifically to uproot it. However, I stress that Black women are oppressed three times over, they are oppressed because of their race, gender and class status. It is therefore pertinent that any movement they may formulate or join address all of these levels of oppression if they are to be applicable. When closely examined, one can immediately see that radical feminism, although it claims to represent all women is in fact a theory of white, middle class, heterosexual women. It seems to collate all masculinity as oppressive masculinity without accounting for the fact although Black men may be 'masculine', they do not have the power to oppress white women; their madams. This is where white women feminisms become

problematic for Black women. What this feminist thought does is tell the Black woman that ‘my man is my problem, and your man is our problem’; much like the other kinds of feminisms. If one is to believe in the struggle for all women, then radical feminism can be put to task for assuming the sameness of all women’s struggles which is practically impossible. This theory takes the problems of heterosexual white, middle class women and universalises them to all women in theory; while ignoring women of colour at the same time. Radical feminism is so detached from the Black woman’s oppression that it completely ignores the role of both the white man and the white woman in that oppression. This was never a hidden by early radical feminists however, as posited above by Delphy, this is a theory through which they (white women) are not fighting for anyone else by themselves.

They (white women) recognise that they are only victims of this identified oppression that they denounce and fight against. The act of even beginning to speak of Black women’s oppression would have turned the entire theory upside down so when they speak it is not in the name or place of others but for themselves. This was made clear from the start. The motto “the personal is political” has been confronted by queer women who felt shunned by this movement and certainly the women of colour who felt completely ignored (Ryan 2007: 2). The concept of women, as was argued, must acknowledge the intersections of race, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, sexuality, disabilities, age, nationality, occupation and education if it is to make any major contribution. The ‘personal’ within the radical feminist movement has represented only the personal of the white woman, because if she acknowledges any other form of womanhood then she too is put on trial for the oppression of others (Ryan 2007).

Further evidence exists in this movement as the white woman has made it clear that she fights for emancipation from equality to men in social, economic and private spheres. Surely then, the white woman, through this call, is not looking for equality to the Black man she has owned as her very own property? The Black man (boy to her) who tends to her gardens and walks her dogs? Surely she is not concerned with being equal to the Black man she has gotten lynched for simply looking at her? No, the white woman is looking for equality to her own man and not any other, she is fighting for herself and not any other woman. I must acknowledge however that, like other feminisms, Radical feminism is useful to Black women as far as gender oppression is

concerned. Like other feminisms Black women would need to tailor it to their own needs. Sexism affects Black women in material, economic, emotional and psychological ways. Sexism is an attitude that turns into policy and makes it possible for Black women to be excluded from programmes that would grant them the necessary independence from their male counterparts. It is sexism that allows the diminishing of women's contributions to society, the minimisation of their labour or the stealing of their achievements for the benefit of men. It is sexism that breeds fertile soil for the killing of women by men because they are said to not be acting right'. It is sexism that empowers men over women so that women are forced to stay in toxic relationships with men they are financially dependent upon.

Black Twitter has forced the Black community to start having very difficult conversations about sexism, particularly in 2018; a year that has been very difficult for Black women in the country. We have seen a rise in femicide, more exposure of toxic masculinity that leads to domestic abuse, exposure of male entitlement to women's bodies that can leads to women's death, exposure of skewed pay-scales that favour first white me-then white women-then Black men- then Black women. Black Twitter, although it supports the advancement of Black women, is still fraught with sexist ideology; especially between Black men and women. The chosen intellectuals are all feminists who speak up, think through and protest about the oppression of women on Black Twitter and elsewhere.

Figure 7.10

Figure 7.11

Mazwai self-identifies as a feminist, she does not however specify any wing of feminism on social media but refers to the need for woman empowerment and

emancipation as her main concern (*Figure 7.10 to 7.11*). She does not believe in supporting all women all the time, or defending all women's actions all the time even when they are being destructive. As an example, Mazwai is avidly opposed to Black women wearing weaves (synthetic hair), she claims, this is a form of self-hate and is caused by centuries of exposure to white supremacy thereby prompting Black women to aspire to 'be white'. Women on Black Twitter tend to disagree with her stance and claim that she is a woman hater disguised as a feminist. This always leads to interesting debates.

Figure 7.12

Women on this platform believe that the ability of Black women to practice choice when it comes to hair styles and that weaves are just hair that should not be analysed in any other way. In fact, they believe this is a manifestation of feminist thought because Black women are no longer being told how to exist in the world. Mazwai vehemently disagrees. Feminism has the reputation of breeding 'man hater' among Black South African men. Mazwai subscribes to a feminism that holds Black men accountable, to the point of swearing at them, especially over violence against Black women. She also expresses love for the Black man as a partner, brother and friend which may dispel the widely held myth.

Figure 7.13

Figure 7.14

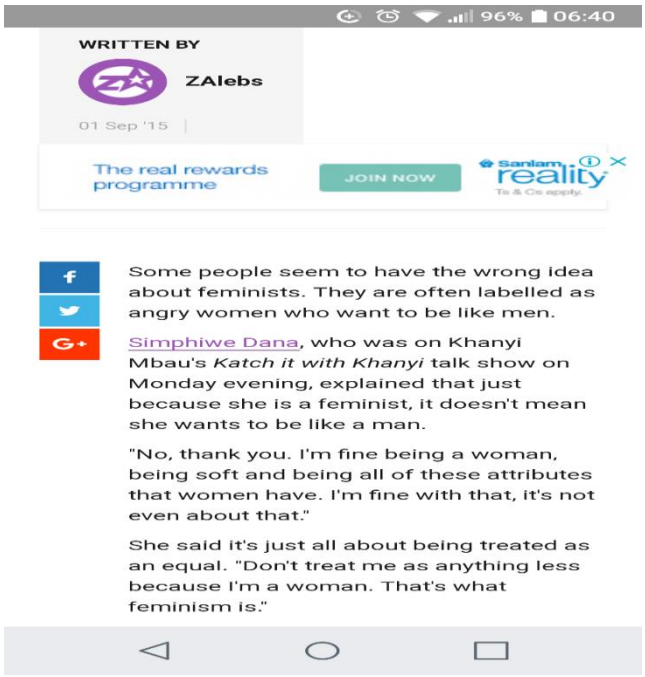

Figure 7.15

Dana also identifies as a feminist (*Figure 7.13 to 7.14)*, she appears to lean more towards the African feminist paradigm or has been described by her followers/supporters as such. It is uncertain whether this is purely based on geographic location, or race or affiliation. She has been in hot water over what she perceives as being “feminism” to the point where she defended herself, saying she is content being a woman in the way women are known to be. She is fine being soft, and that is not what feminism is even about. What she fights against is the limiting of women’s opportunities solely based on their gender. To her, that is what feminism is. Some of her followers have disagreed with some of her sentiments, particularly the debate that has been popular lately; where many believe that African cultures in practice and belief are inherently oppressive towards women. In South Africa, Xhosa women carry the reputation of being unruly, loud, outspoken, ‘kleva’ (street smart), rebellious, uncultured, and crooked. Dana believes that this is testament to a woman who will not be dictated to by a culture she sees as oppressive, against all odds she will rebel to create a narrative of her own for her life. This can be problematic of course as many view them as “not marriage material” for men who seek a so called ‘submissive’ wife. Some of her followers support that this is a form of feminist expression and should be celebrated as such.

7.5 On Land as Liberation

The age old land debate in South Africa has been invigorated once again since the liberation struggle of the past several decades. This section situates the return of stolen land to the dispossessed native as one of the major tenets of liberation, especially for Black women who suffer the brunt of poverty in our society. I make the argument here that without land there is no liberation. The dispossessed masses of the country have been engaged in these conversations since the dawn of ‘freedom’ but many have been muzzled by hopes of a smooth transition into the idealised ‘rainbow nation’ espoused by Madiba where those who wronged Africans would atone voluntarily and seek reconciliation from those oppressed by their privilege. This has proven to be a tall order, prompting the public arousal of the land question one more time. The South African constitution that was adopted in May 1996 makes a profound promise in its preamble; a promise that arouses questions in the minds of Africans, questions no politician has been able to answer. The line claims that ‘South Africa

belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity'. In this section I seek to highlight the manner in which the constitution is a document of betrayal to the dispossessed, landless Africans containing unfulfilled promises that have done little but pacify them into believing in false claims of 'freedom', particularly where land in concerned. It must be made clear, as has been argued by detractors of the land debate, that land 'ownership' in African epistemology is treated very differently compared to the Western world. Thus this debate, in the manner that it occurs is a response to past injustices and dispossession and not necessarily a practice of Africa custom. Many have used African epistemology on the matter to claim that Africans should not seek ownership of their land because that is not their ontological way of existence, therefore extending further African landlessness under the guise of protecting custom.

The land debate in all its forms is a response to the European invasion we have suffered for centuries and should be treated as such, and whatever resolution emanates from it should be seen in that light and not as abandonment of who we are. Firstly, I would like to dispel the Western notion of land being only an economic entity for this notion is why we are here today. What was taken from Africans through colonial wars, dispossessions, forced removals and the cruel lands acts of the apartheid regime was the 'belonging' that the 1996 constitution promises to restore. These events combined led to Africans being forced out of areas they called home for centuries, to their ancestral land being violently snatched away and given to whites, leading to them being unable to produce enough to feed themselves so they could be forced to be cheap, replaceable labourers for their oppressors.

In 'Conversations of the World', Prof Magobe Ramose lambasts the constitution for its exclusion of the cornerstone of African humanness in the form of 'Ubuntu' by not citing the ideology even once thereby cementing the exteriority of Africans in the imaginary of the country even today. By doing so, the constitution, arbitrarily proves that it is not interested in justice for Africans but seeks instead to cover up the crimes committed against them. Had it been included in the constitution, the ideology of Ubuntu would have forced the powers that be to seek justice, reparation and restitution for Africans, part of which is the return of land to its rightful owners but that was clearly not the aim of the constitution. Ramose (2016) decries the version of Ubuntu that has been stolen, whitewashed and handed back to Africans in useless pieces. This version forces

Africans to offer blind reconciliation and forgiveness, as championed by the TRC, without justice thereby sending the message that Africans are not worth fighting for and seeking complete justice for. As historically designed through colonial-apartheid, land in South Africa is currently in the hands of the white minority. Fact Check *(Figure 7.16 to 7.17*) posits that 67% of commercial agricultural land is owned by the white farmers while only 15% 'communal' land is reserved for blacks and is mostly owned by the state. These statistics reflect the historical 87/13 apartheid design where the majority was relegated to only 13% of the land in the country while 87% was reserved exclusively for white use. As land became a commercial and economic entity, dispossession of blacks facilitated the deliberate impoverishment of the Black majority thereby forcing them into farms, mines and 'kitchens' as slave labour for the white oppressing minority.

Africans then began to feel the exclusion in real ways, not only did they not belong on the land of their ancestors in spiritual ways but the economy was tied directly to the land from which they were excluded. They could not grow their own food and they had been moved from arable land to exterior, mostly infertile land. Some had been moved to reservations where they did not have enough land to live, let alone plough. The persistence of apartheid spatial planning is exactly what has inspired the reinvigoration of the land question.

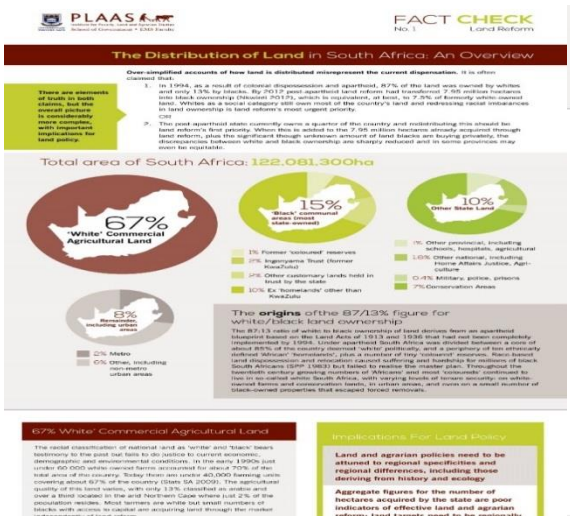

Figure 7.16 ***Figure 7.17***

The argument I seek to advance here is that, while Whiteness is the exclusive race that seeks superiority, blackness is an inclusive entity which has never sought to be

above anyone and is able to appreciate difference. I mention this in appreciation for the uniqueness of South Africa compared to other African states where settlers are a small minority or non-existent. Nationalism in the African context should never be seen in the same vein as white nationalism because the former is never oppressive or exclusionary, in fact, if based in African tradition then it appreciates and accepts fluidity and diversity. When Africans call for an 'Africa for Africans' what they want is a continent in which they feel a deep sense of 'belonging' and one whose wealth benefits them. This is not a lot to ask of course, there are those in the elite political class who use these calls to divide people based on mythical tribes and 'race, as Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009: 62) posits. He uses the example of the Zimbabwean land reform project that began as a noble redistribution programme and turned into a violent, nationalist disaster. There are lessons to be learnt in the Zimbabwean saga but those should never be held against the heads of Africans in other states who seek justice in terms of land. Bundy (1984) tracks the hunger of African people for land in the 19th century, this hunger is what drove many to join liberation movements and risk their lives.

Bundy (1984: 14) makes it clear that Africans have always tied their 'freedom' to the return of stolen land and we can argue that until this is achieved, they are in fact not really free. Writing to ANC leadership in the 1940's, Govan Mbeki advised that, the cause of scepticism of rural Transkieans in joining the liberation is its perceived ignorance on issues of land and its concentration in the 'reserves' while ignoring rural inhabitants (Bundy 1984:16). Mbeki advised the leadership that, rural inhabitants are suffering under and organising against state sanctioned cattle-culling, a programme that facilitated the castration of cows and segregating them so that they would not breed, leading to their eventual demise.

Mbeki explains that rural inhabitants need assistance in strategising their resistance, the ANC is said to have ignored this call until after 1945 (Bundy 1984: 23). The history of the liberation proves that Black liberation is intertwined directly with the land question which has been ignored by the ANC elite political class for over a century. The question is even more urgent in the 21st where Black exclusion and poverty are on the rise, more than ever Africans feel an increased sense of exteriority not only in South Africa but the world as a whole. With the rise in white nationalism in Trump's

America, ‘keep Europe white’ emanating from immigrant crisis, Africans need to feel a sense of rootedness and safety on their land. Iheduru (2004: 14) notes that, “land reform has largely been an unrealised goal in South Africa, with ‘natives’ still expected to accept and appreciate crumbs that fall off the Master’s table that, although coated in good intentions make no real difference the status quo”. Iheduru (2004) posits that, Mandela’s government settled only 30 of the 40,000 submitted land reform cases. By 2003, claims had increased to 72, 975 with 36000 being settled. In 2004, ten years after the transition, two thirds of the country’s farms were still owned by 60,000 white farmers while 14 million Black subsistence farmers scrambled to make living in the former Bantustans.

The ‘willing seller, willing buyer’ policy proved to be a complete failure prompting the government to introduce the Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development model which was meant to create 70,000 Black commercial farmers by 2017, also a complete failure (Iheduru 2004: 15). Land redistribution in South Africa is a sensitive matter which needs decisive political will that is driven by a sense of justice. If lessons are to be learnt from the Zimbabwean land reform, it is that the status quo is not sustainable and will eventually lead to violence. Although all chosen intellectuals have voiced concerns about the exclusion of Black people from productive sectors of the economy, Mazwai is the most vocal where the current land question is concerned.

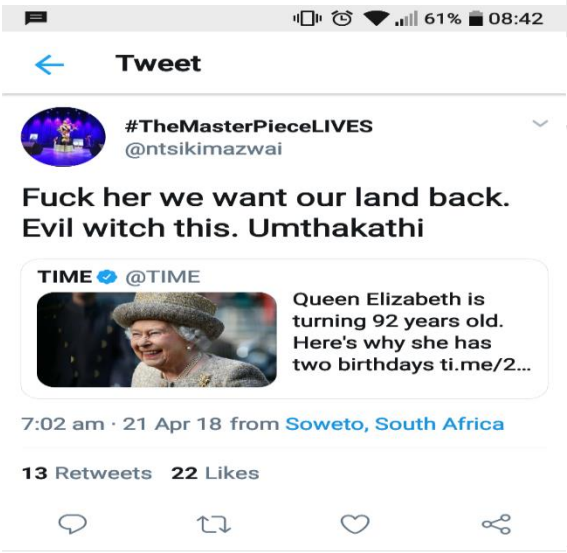

Figure 7.18

Figure 7.19

On land, as on many issues of Black emancipation, Mazwai takes a more radical and less negotiated stance where she argues that the land belongs to Africans first and foremost and should be allocated as such. She does not sanitise nor minimise her thoughts, in (*Figure 7.19*) she asserts that, “when it comes to land, shit must hit the fan on both sides” (both Black and white community). Her ideas of who is African are clearly defined and displays utter hatred for settler colony that is South Africa. Many of her followers, both Black and white have called her crazy, racist, annoying, and have attributed her tweets to her monthly cycle on plenty of occasions. She never changes her stance but has taken to admitting that when she’s on her period she is ‘bitchy’ and so people must expect to be especially radical on these days.

This perhaps is a strategy on her part to explain herself without saying outright that she is simply enraged and traumatised by the violence meted out on Black people by the country and continent. Every time the land debate arises, it brings out of the woodwork people who advocate for the maintenance of the status quo on the grounds that food security will be threatened by expropriation because ‘Blacks cannot farm’. Mazwai among others has facilitated a conversation on the uses of land from the Black perspective that goes beyond just farming and speaks of more than just rural land (Figure 7.20 to 7.22).

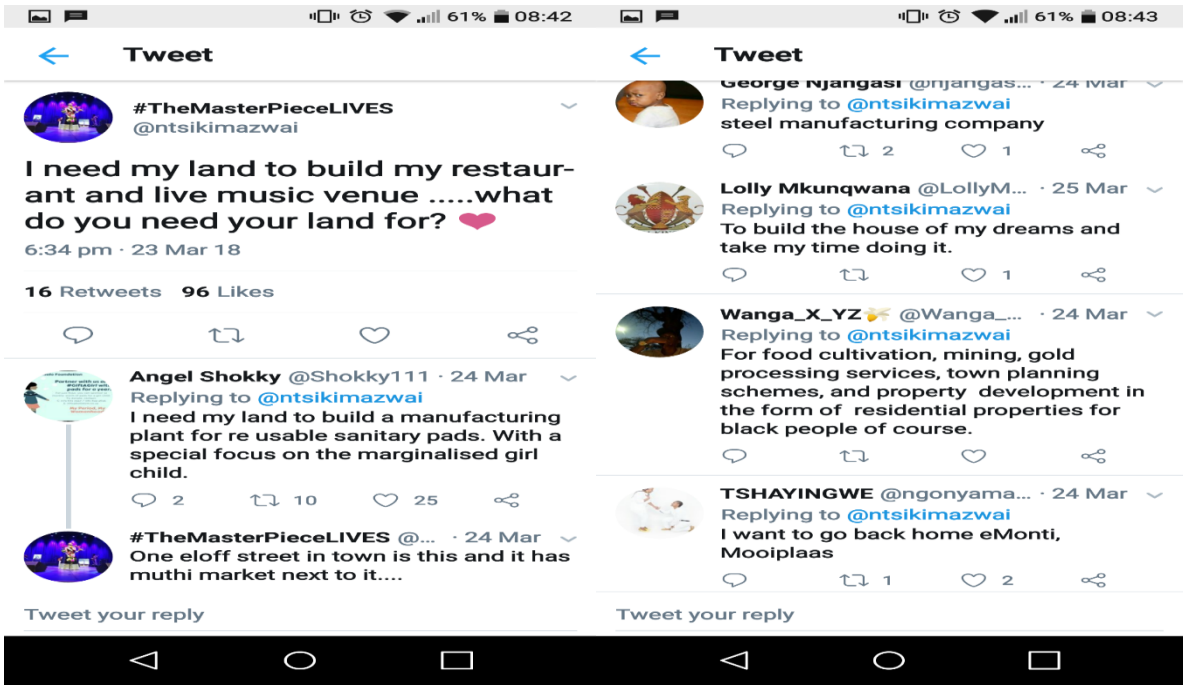

Figure 7.20 ***Figure 7.21***

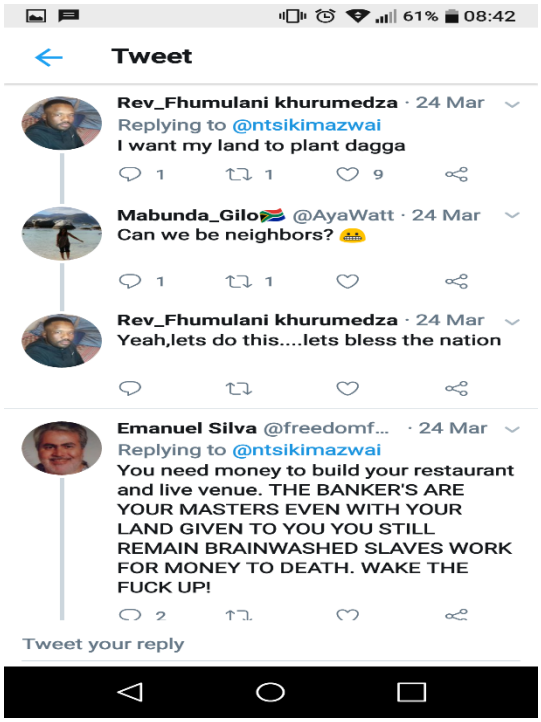

Figure 7.22

The conversation expanded the debate on land ownership in a capitalist society to that of business opportunity, social development, education reform and many other aspects. South Africa is an active, living, breathing crime scene littered in Black blood, sweat and tears and the return of land is seen by Mazwai as but the first step to rectifying the crimes of the past and healing the Black nation. Mazwai is not ignorant of the potential impact of challenging white power, she knows this can carry dire consequences for the country as seen in Zimbabwe but she boldly posits that, 'makunyiwe macala'. This statement expresses the shit-based experiences of blacks in the country and says we are used to it, the other side will get used to it too.

Figure 7.23

Mazwai *(figure 7.23*) has also taken on white owned media for glorifying people and efforts made by the radical young leader Julius Malema while former president Zuma was removed from office while quickly demonising him as soon as he speaks on land expropriation. This exposes media bias and agenda in the country and proves that white power cushions itself in so-called objectivity while misinforming and misrepresenting Black struggle.

Figure 7.24

As noted in Chapter 5, Dana has been battling depression and so, has been 'offline' for a while. She has not posted much on the subject but she has been singing the song that decries our dispossession 'Thina Sizwe; for decades. Dana, like many Black South Africans, is concerned about the return of the land to its original owners and speaks of this much in her artistry. Dana is a very intuitive artist, who goes into a trance on stage whenever she sings the songs that touch a cord. She speaks the hopes and dreams of so many Black people where land is concerned.

Figure 7.25

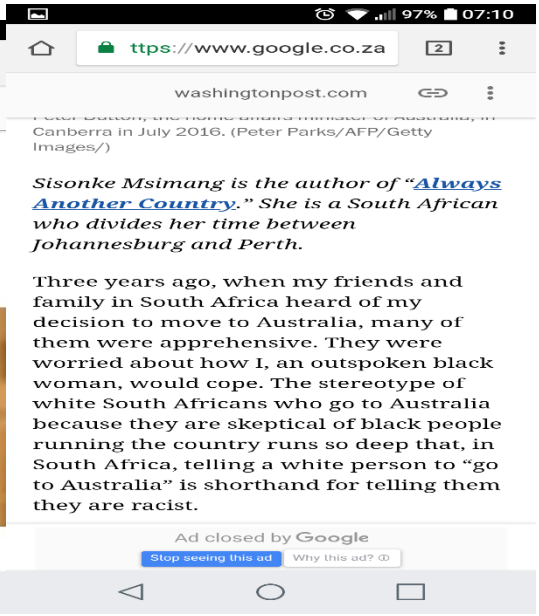

Figure 7.26

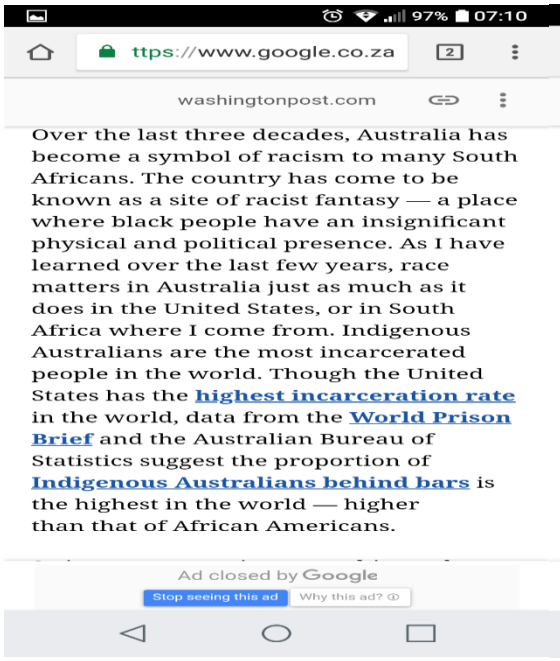

Figure 7.27

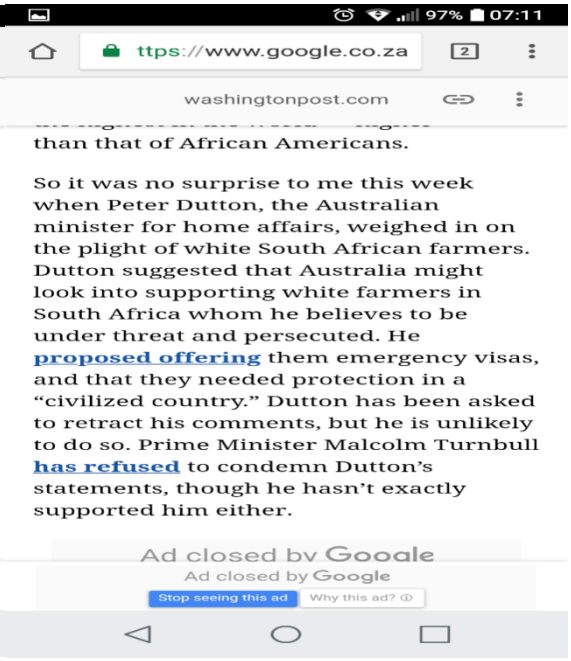

Figure 7.28

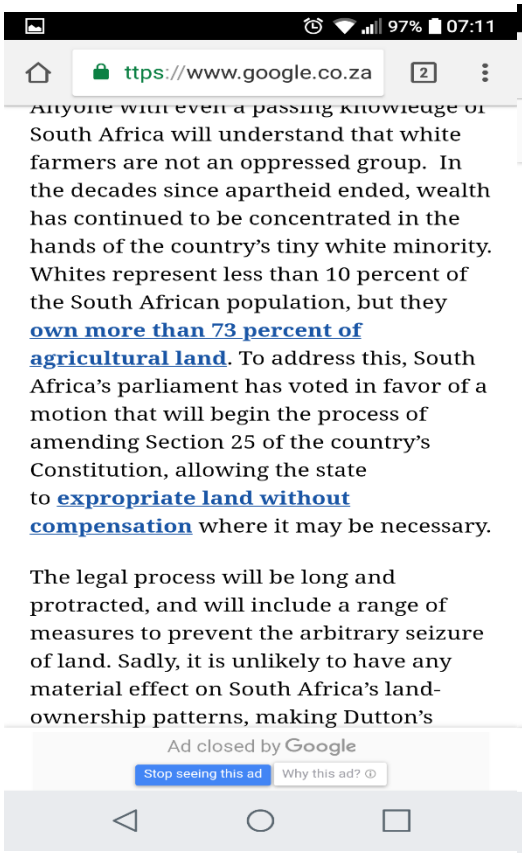

Figure 7.29

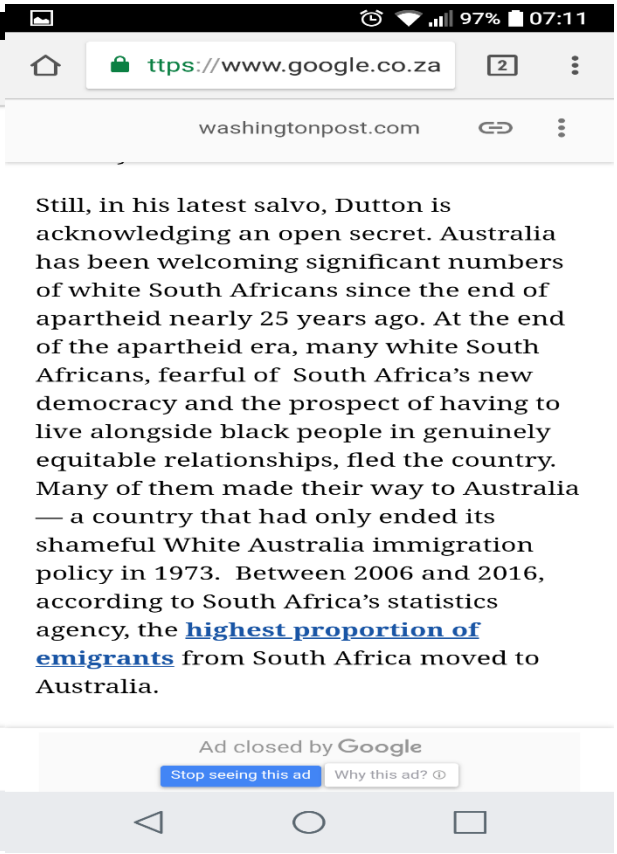

Figure 7.30

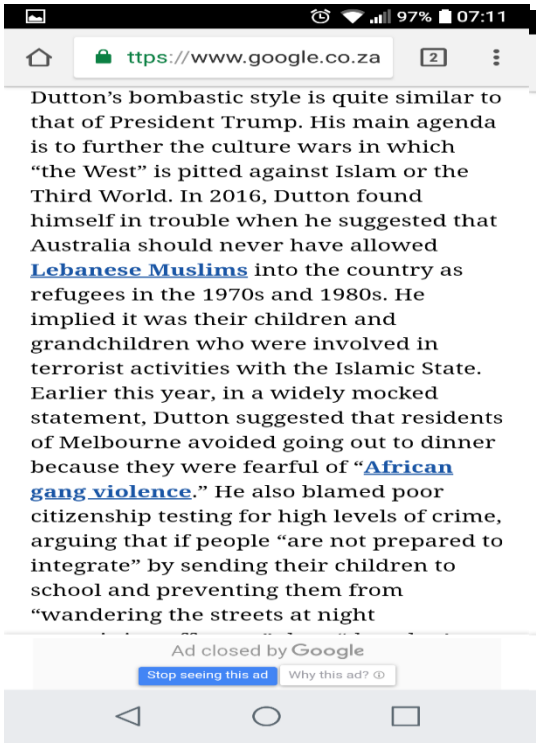

Figure 7.31

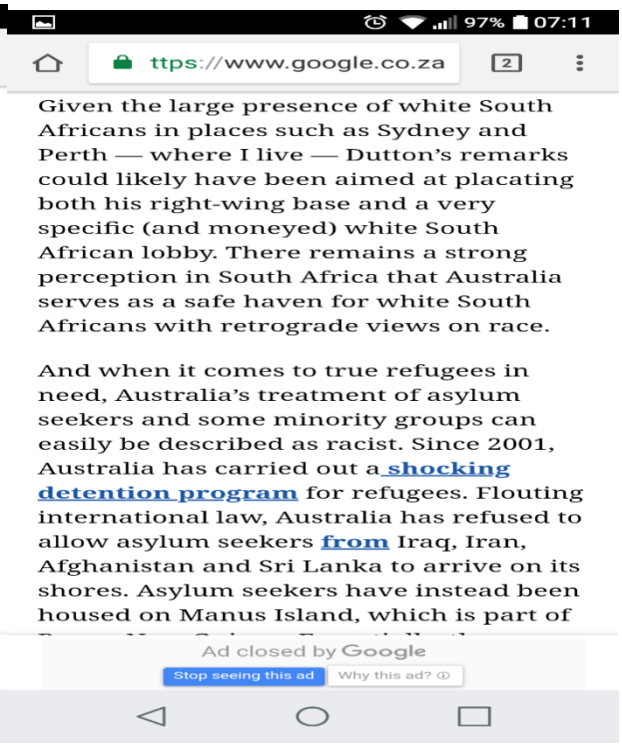

Figure 7.32

Msimang has weighed in on the land debate with one of her articles (*Figure 7.25 to 7.32*), this after the Australian minister of home affairs called upon the country to offer fast-tracked visa services for white South Africans who feel persecuted by the land debate. In this article, she exposes the racism that underlies not only this offer but also the thousands of Afrikaaners who have left the country since 94 with the fear of competing with Black people on equal footing. Msimang notes that Afrikaaners equate the value of land with their humanity; that an “attack” on land is an attack on their very being but they do not afford their Black counterparts the same understanding or sympathy on the same topic. Afrikaaners do not believe that Black people suffered an attack on their humanity during dispossessions and therefore require restorative justice. This is positioned as a show of blatant racism and the hierarchy of humanity in South Africa.

7.6 Conclusion

This chapter has closely examined the meaning of liberation for an oppressed people. I have used a number of vehicles to achieve this, I first look at the ‘cry’ where oppressed are concerned by examining two of the most popular struggle songs in South Africa. I argued that, once natives have exhausted all means of getting peace, respect and prosperity in the colonial world a particular cry becomes their only refuge. I have argued that the one who seeks liberation is one who has known liberation, one who seeks respect is one who has known respect and is therefore able to recognise when she is no longer in possession of those treasured belongings. I further situate the liberation of the Black nation in the return of ancestral land, this is the only way true liberation can be achieved. The Black woman is a cornerstone and one of the biggest contributors towards the struggles for liberation; although the neo-colonial world tends to label her as radical should she speak from blackness. Where Black liberation is concerned, I argued here as I have argued throughout this piece of work that the struggle of every Black woman, man and child should be united if victory is to be realised. I posit the chosen intellectuals as advocates for Black liberation; they speak and think on the Black condition through their various means of communication as well as through Black Twitter.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

8.1 Meditations

Below are the research objectives that sought to be addressed by this thesis. I have explained throughout the thesis that, Blackness is a positionality of damnation, one that soloists similar reactions of death from the dominating 'other'. Additionally, the Black condition, Blackness and Black life (the condition of the damned, the zone of non-being) is an intersectional form of being. Blackness and the conditions thereof affect all areas of one's life, simultaneously; whether one chooses to see or not. The Black struggle thus, is also intersectional in nature; dealing Blackness in totality and not separately. I have therefore made the strategic decision to deal with the research objectives in an intertextual manner in this chapter, deciding that it is impossible to deal with one issue at a time. Hence it is difficult to answer each of the following research question surgically removed from the rest as they overlap in their intersectionality.

1. To evaluate the extent to which these three public intellectuals fulfil the role and functions of a public intellectual, using Fanon's Native Intellectual's Consciousness theory as a measuring yardstick.
2. To investigate how Black public intellectuals use social media for social activism.
3. To evaluate the positionality of Black public intellectuals and their resultant discourses on matters of identity, politics, feminism, race and Blackness.
4. To explore how Black women position themselves as thinkers, speakers and liberators.

This study set out to evaluate the role and positionality of three Black public intellectuals using Fanon's Native Intellectual as a theoretical lens. The three intellectuals were chosen from a pool of concerned young Black people who are currently intellectualizing the Black condition using various forms of activism on Black Twitter. In my argument, I positioned Black Twitter as the political arena on which blackness has carved out space to perform itself, speak through its pain and think deeply about solutions. It was important to position not only Black Twitter as counter-space for 'Black speak', but to also position an authentic Black voice in the study of communications. In conducting this study, I have uncovered the extent of the

exteriority of the Black body in formal academic discourses that in theory are said to be about her. The Black is the ultimate “other” who is determined without, as posited by Fanon ([1961] 1990).

From the outset, I sought to challenge the notion of the Black public intellectual by situating this being in the African context and arguing that native/organic intellectualism is a more inclusive form of intellectualism compared to current conceptions of the intellectual. The concept and activity of intellectualising have been turned into an exclusionary elitist club for centuries. Accelerated by the dawn of the westernisation of the world through colonisation. I have uncovered fundamental differences between the ‘intellectual’ as conceptualized in literature and the ‘Black intellectual’ in practice. The Black intellectual is one that is haunted by centuries of intergenerational trauma, by memories imbedded in their DNA passed down from one generation to the next.

A true Black intellectual speaks, thinks, and writes from this trauma. However, more often than not the Black intellectual is created by several levels of anti-Black facets of society like the westernised university, the media, and the academic community and therefore has to function within these spaces while dealing with the baggage of blackness. The neo-colonialism that exists in the anti-Black spaces has proven insufficient and ineffective in redressing the current state of the Black being. Therefore, this Black intellectual is forced to either protest as Fanon ([1952] 2008) suggests, assert himself ‘as a Black man’ even if this makes others uncomfortable; or he can denitrify himself and cower at the pressure of the racist westernised society. The organic intellectual, on the other hand, is one that is formed and nurtured by the people; he is powered by the knowledge of his ancestor, speaks and thinks from indigenous knowledge reserves.

The westernised world tends to view the intellectual as an ‘expert’ who enters the safe space of communities to talk down to, extract from and part with communities after having been informed/taught/educated by them. This form of intellectual labour is toxic as it takes away from the real experts and exalts singular individuals to the status of ‘expert’ on subjects they know very little of. With this in mind, I have therefore proposed an operational definition of the concept that grounds this study and its deliberately

chosen trajectory. The intellectual I have engaged here "*uses her platform as a writer-artist-activist-leader-teacher-thinker to fight for the decolonial emancipation of Black people, she affirms and is affirmed by her blackness and is unbound by gender, sexuality and religion*". This definition combines views on intellectualism extracted from Fanon (1963), Gramsci (2014), and Smith (1999. This definition extends existing definitions that not only bind intellectuals to the pearly corridors of the university but also limit them to doing certain kinds of "intellectual labour". I argued here that African societies have always been inclusive societies where multiple ways of knowing, of being and fluidity in traditions have been encouraged. As a people, we have always perceived individuals and communities as holistic entities that changed, moved and transformed constantly. Gramsci (2014) posits that intellectuals articulate the wishes, hopes and aspirations of the social class from which they come. I extend that they speak from, with and for the 'people' from which they come. The Black intellectual I have engaged in this study speaks from the pain of her people. She is aware that her relationship with her people has been damaged because they are damaged, she too is damaged. She is working to mend this relationship so that she is able to fight with her people at the moment of "henceforth".

Said (2003) challenges intellectuals to think about their alliances and what these could mean for the future of the oppressed. He asserts that the major choice faced by the intellectual is whether to align himself with the stability of the victor or the more difficult path of aligning with the oppressed. From this assertion, one can see that it is easier and more beneficial to align with the stability of the ruling class although that stability equals a constant state of emergency for the oppressed and threatens them with complete extinction. Spillers (1994) notes this as a pathology and claims that Black intellectuals are easily distracted by the shiny lights of fame and fortune that they abandon the real struggles of their people to chase these bright lights.

It is important to note that we recognise the pathology of the black, as an intellectual or otherwise. One cannot carry such immense colonial trauma and not be affected by it. It is therefore important that the Black intellectual not diagnose her people as psychologically and emotionally damaged, but realises that she too needs healing which can only come from working together. This study proves the need for the Black

to create safe spaces where familiar discourse can take place. However, the white establishment does not allow this, in fact it smothers any Black who wishes to centralise her people's struggles. It is therefore paramount that spaces of 'counter-thought' are created and fostered in order to deal with the particularities of Black oppression. When speaking of 'the public' in South Africa today, one is forgiven to imagine a holistic mass of people 'united in their diversity'. A people who co-exist in harmony, at the very least that is, the African centered way of building societies. However, upon close examination one quickly realises that blackness is outside of this dynamic and exists on the margins of what is considered 'the public'. Since 1994, South Africa has lobbied the notion of undertaking activities that are 'in the public interest' or 'for the public good'; this gave a false impression of the inclusion of Black people in public discourse in an attempt to right the wrongs of the past. Since then not much has changed for the Black occupying the zone of non-being. They are still systematically excluded from all sectors of society that could yield prosperity and growth. This is exactly why present South Africa needs intellectuals who possess exceptional levels of decolonial consciousness and activism; intellectuals, who have discarded the 'white Western man' who resides in all colonized subjects (Grosfuguel 2016). When one is conscious, one is fully aware of their environment; they can identify the challenges, aspirations and wishes of those with whom they interact.

Intellectuals therefore, need not just be aware of their environment but be able to decipher the embedded causes of the people's challenges. An intellectual who possesses 'decolonial consciousness' should be able to articulate for her people when they ask the fundamental question "how does it feel to be a problem"? (Du Bois 1994). These are intellectuals who have by all accounts "resigned" from the establishment and are committed to the struggles of their people. Fanon (1963) asserts that because the settler has made himself the standard of humanity, all colonised subjects tend to aspire to whiteness as the only way to get relief from the system. We try with all our might to 'denitrify' ourselves and consistently, the system rejects us because Black skin will never be white.

The moment of resignation arrives when we stop trying to assimilate; this is a powerful period of liberation that inspires intrapersonal conversations of what it means to be

Black in the world. Fanon ([1952] 2008) postulated that, after admiring the master's ways of being even, joining the master's army finally resigned and asserted: *"I made up my mind, since it was impossible to rid myself of an innate complex, to assert myself as a BLACK MAN. Since the Other was reluctant to recognise me, there was only one answer: to make myself known."* Fanon ([1952] 2008) teaches us that a self-affirmed Black is a liberated Black and therefore a fear-inducing black; this is why he encourages us to introspect so we can arrive at this moment of self-affirmation. Grosfuguel (2016) acknowledges that we all have a white man inside of our psyche, this is to be expected after centuries of occupation but we need to silence him if we want to speak from our oppression and positionality. Maldonado-Torres (2016) terms this moment of silencing the white man a "resignation", a moment that Biko (2004) posited would lead to total mayhem as blacks would finally realise that they had 'nothing to lose' if the world as we know it were turned upside down through revolution.

I have argued here that the anti-Black world remains so no matter how much the Black ingratiates to it. The Black public intellectual therefore need not seek assimilation to a world that despises her. The anti-Black world remains exclusionary, discriminatory, racist, unequal, oppressive, and suppressive towards all Black people, all the time; particularly when they intellectualise from Blackness. In the first instance, the racialised 'other' (the Black) is a creation of whiteness, deliberately and carefully formed in order to justify rape, murder, occupation, enslavement. Because of this, blackness will remain 'othered' for as long as whiteness benefits materially from its subjugation. I posit in this study that even today the world is inherently anti-Black because the white world benefits from anti-blackness, through cheap/modern-day slave labour, access to economic and social capital, the plunder of Black resources, and the theft of mineral, intellectual and spiritual resources from Black people. In this order, the Black is an invisible entity that is granted conditional visibility to be used for the benefit of 'normals'.

Conditional visibility should never be mistaken for acceptance or embrace for it is a pathological visibility that is grounded in the notion of blacks as property and part of flora and fodder; to be summoned when necessary. In an attempt to bring this point closer to home, I have explained in detail the ways in which South Africa, much like

the continent and world, is anti-black. Biko (2004) cautioned against leaders who would misdiagnose the problems of Black people, rush to negotiated settlements and arrive at unbecoming solutions. For example, if the struggle was for liberation, Biko (2004) would caution against the acceptance of half-baked 'democracy' because in essence that is an empty word. The people were not fighting just to vote for one oppressor over another, they were fighting for absolute emancipation from oppressive systems. Biko (2004) asserted that the economic, social and psychological being of the Black had been under a savage attack for centuries and any solution that did not account for all them would not succeed. He calls upon blacks to look within and seek healing from within as well as from without. In this way the Black will be healed of his inferiority complex that renders him sheepish and timid in the face of his oppressor. South Africa as we know it emerges out this dark history of settler colonialism and apartheid and it cannot be cleaned through a whitewashed TRC, rainbow nationalist ideology, or transformation pipedreams. It is clear from history and experience that anti-blackness is a deeply entrenched attitude that spills over into policy and human relations; therefore, it cannot just be wished away. The remainder of the colonial-apartheid apparatus, two (2) decades after 'democracy' lies squarely at the lack of decisive, progressive and decolonial leadership.

The perpetuation of apartheid spatial organisation should be blamed on the same leaders. Anti-blackness is difficult to root out once it has been accepted as the natural order of things; this is the challenge South Africa faces at this moment. Due to a colonial wound that has been festering for centuries, ignored/silenced pain and unhealed scars the country has come to a point of reckoning, as seen in the past 5 years. This is signaled by increases in crime, regular protests and revitalised activism for human rights. In this study, I position Black Twitter as a space on which much of the social media activism occurs. Black Twitter is positioned here as the communication medium through which blackness attempts to speak from its pain, through its pain and about its pain. Although this platform is one created by the western world without a concern for oppression or racism it is the one that has been transformed into a space for blackness to perform itself.

Black Twitter has become a ‘safe space’ for blackness to articulate itself without fear. By “safe” I do not mean the platform is without policing, Black bodies are always policed; the platform is safe because blackness chooses to express itself regardless of policing or the discomfort of the dominant society. Black Twitter is currently the most active and lucrative sector of Twitter, although it is an unofficial space. Black people the world over have made it official, for themselves. Black Twitter is a ‘counter-space’ where those who do not fit the narrative of the mainstream can have conversations that are meaningful among their population. Mazwai, Dana and Msimang were chosen from this population of people who, in different ways, use their influence to drive the agenda of restorative justice, human rights preservation, land restoration and free and fair education to mention a few. Black Twitter has fostered a spirit of solidarity amongst the oppressed that has been invisible since 1994. This is not to proclaim a unified oppressed class or to credit only Black Twitter for any gains made but I want to highlight the role played by the platform, among other factors. More (2009) posits that Black Solidarity as a concepts is born out of Black oppression, prompted by the need to converge with people who experience the world in similar ways. In this study, I conceptualised Black Solidarity within Communication studies; a field that usually pretends to be marginally affected by issues of race. I have shown in detail how the field, through the pretense of neutrality and ‘universalism’, has ignored many issues that affect Black people and thereby promote injustice. Not only this, it is through communication that Black people are pathologised, dehumanised and criminalised so the field is really not innocent.

Because of this assumption of neutrality, Black Solidarity becomes the cornerstone of Black communication practice on Black Twitter. When the world renders blacks invisible, they find counter-spaces where they can ‘be’. I do not claim nor posit that Black Twitter is a completely perfect space where systemic anti-blackness is dealt with effectively all the time. White supremacy and racism are massive systems of oppression that have been developed and tested over centuries, they will take a massive revolution in order to undo. Black Twitter has had run-ins with racism and dealt with these in ways I critique in this study. I have asserted here that communication studies and Black intellectuals on Black Twitter need to first and

foremost do a thorough study of anti-blackness, systematic and structural racism and how these affect Black people in order to lead members in meaningful protest.

Once this is done, strategies of how to deal with such debilitating exclusion need to be formulated and set into motion, with the people and by the people. Perhaps the positive thing about Black Twitter is that leaders/intellectuals are not feared, worshipped or sanctified, they get 'called out' when they prove to be problematic on matters of the Black condition. Black Twitter has lent its loud voice to different activist movements that condemned racist incidents in the past three (3) years in various ways. I have discusses the different cases, including the Penny Sparrow and Vicki Momberg cases as examples. However, I must reiterate that these minor cases of micro-aggressions are not what Black people should be focused on.

The mission for Black Twitter and Black people should not be to change the mental attitudes of racist, but to topple structural racism and transform society totally; attitudes will follow. I have argued here that racist ideology is so sick that it gets a certain sadistic kick out of millions of Black bodies being so affected/offended by a racist advertisement/tweet/post/statement; this leads to deliberate racism in order to get this reaction. Our reactions to these advertisement/posts/tweets are guaranteed to 'trend' meaning the company; brand or person gets free exposure at our expense. Corporations might just be deliberately racist so that they get free advertising. This has been termed "rage marketing", the ability to create racist content in order to get the oppressed to market a certain corporation. The point is, millions of Black bodies on Black Twitter does not equal clever attempts at dealing with anti-blackness; it could actually spell the opposite.

Black Twitter, because it is comprised of the very Black bodies that do not even possess humanity proper in the anti-Black world is really engaged in what I called in this study "the impotent Black rant". Unless and until blackness restores its humanity then any type of activism against anti-blackness is mute, it can be observed but is not heard. I do not seek to engage in victim blaming here, I am fully aware that the Black condition is a creation of white racism in order to secure white privileged. I am merely suggesting that through Black Solidarity on Black Twitter, blackness can begin to come

closer to itself and refill its empty shell with self-love and love of other Black people. What can be observed on Black Twitter as well, is the pathological need for Black people have for allies in non-Black communities; I posit this has not worked during the many struggles for freedom and it will not work now.

History has proven to us that those who call themselves liberals are just as dangerous as outright racists where our freedom is concerned and we should never seek nor rely on them. Biko (2004) asserts that white liberals want a world that is 'less obviously' racist, a world that is somewhat equal but does not touch their white privilege. They therefore do not want freedom for all oppressed people, just those they can tolerate and those who can assimilate into whiteness and make them comfortable for being "good white people". Black people need not be ashamed of expressing without fear that they are focused on one another at this moment and do not need any interference from any other group. When this is achieved, the communicative practice of Black people will have been changed/configured, rooted in Black Solidarity for the betterment of the race. Black Twitter, as mentioned above, is riddled with the evils of tribalism, sexism, homophobia, Afro-phobia and patriarchy; these affect any solidarity that is forged before it gets off the ground. This signals a deep need for us to have serious conversations among ourselves about ourselves before we can involve any other groups in our midst. Black solidarity is not a racist ideology but an ideology that is formulated in response to racism targeted at Black people; therefore, we should not feel uneasy about proclaiming our solidarity to one another especially at this crucial moment of awakening and healing. I have argued throughout this study that the problem of Black people lies in their dehumanisation. Having been stripped of the right, privileges and entitlements that are afforded all 'humans' has facilitated their inability to thrive in the world as we know it.

Black men, women and children have been oppressed as a race above any other group of people; not that I seek to compare levels of oppression. Among Black people as a race, Black women have been and still remain severely underserved by the world. They still carry the burden of the oppression of their people in history and are still at the bottom of the chain of concern for empowerment today. To start with I have posed questions of the Black woman's humanity through Hamid Dabashi's concern with the

question of thought. If the Black woman has been oppressed and dehumanised all these centuries, what sense has she made out of this condition? At the core of the argument here is the fact that, Black people in general and Black women in particular are always reduced to the sum of their parts in the Western imaginary. The Black woman is 'boobs, ass, hips, and genitals' therefore inconceivable as a thinker.

Because she has been reduced to nothingness, a mere dark spot in history; her thought is also marginalised and ignored. The Black woman's thought, I argue, has been reduced to folklore/suspicion while the 'other' plundered and stole the same thought to use it for him/herself. Over centuries, both the white and Black world have accepted that the Black woman is simply not a thinker; seemingly, as all intellectual labour tends to be masculanised. Upon observation, one sees how scholars like Biko, Thiongo, Fanon, West etc. make not only Black thinkers male, but they also make the Black human a man. This further externalises the Black woman from humanity, in and out of her own community. As the Black woman is externalised, her role as a producer, custodian and disseminator of knowledge does not get credited to her but to either the white community or sometimes the Black man. I posit through this study, as well as through observations of Black Twitter that the world is not ready to hear the Black woman's thought because her being puts the world on trial. The world would have to account for all its savagery towards her and her people. The Black woman's intellectual labour tends to be hidden under a phallic shadow. This can be clearly seen with the activism of Winnie Mandela, the political and career achievements of Mamphele Ramphele or the achievements of Tshepo Motsepe-Ramaphosa. Black women who step out of the role of supporter of the Black man are shunned, demonised and misunderstood within and without her community. She is demonised through bastardised cultural beliefs, customs and traditions. Spivak (2010) wonders whether subaltern bodies are given space to speak, this question is ever more relevant where the Black woman is concerned. She is the most silenced oppressed being to date.

She cannot speak of her pain; her movements are constantly appropriated for the benefit of others while she is left exposed. The various feminist movements are formations that were based solely on Black women's struggles for freedom during and after slavery. The Black woman has been attempting to speak through her pain for

centuries; she has been ignored, shunned, and silenced in all her attempts. The three chosen intellectuals used in this study identify and are perceived as feminists, although they are not specific about the branch of feminism they ascribe to. They all want to work towards the emancipation of women from under the thumb of men of whatever race, they want to see a world where sisterhood between women is realised and women are free to make their own economic, social and sexual decisions. Dana, Mazwai and Msimang have been known to have heated debates on Black Twitter, to a point where one might say they were being 'petty'. Perhaps these are necessary as they make sense of the Black condition as they see it individually. Black solidarity does not mean the absence of disagreements, it means choosing the race every time.

This study is situated as a praise song for the woman who disregards all suggestions that she should keep silent and never think nor speak of her pain. The Black woman who has been pushing boundaries for centuries, creating and nurturing movements only to be silenced in them. The Black woman who has put her own body on the line while in the struggle for her people's liberation. The Black woman *IS* her people's liberation. At the moment of henceforth, she fights for her people's liberation with her mind, body and soul. She hears the cries of her people from afar and knows to rush to their rescue, even when others recoil in fear as Winnie Mandela embodies. The Black woman seeks, fights for and works towards the liberation of her people, she does not apologise for wanting complete emancipation for her race. Others call her radical, irrational, overly emotional when social justice is not recognised for her people. She responds with a scoff because she knows that there is nothing rational about the world as it is and the oppressed can therefore not be expected to be rational. South Africa has been engaged in policy to deal with racism that presents itself in speech during day to day interaction between people. Black Twitter can be credited for forcing government ministers to look at this pertinent issue. Although the envisaged policy on racism is not perfect one can appreciate the beginning of the conversation. Black people's liberation is reliant completely on land and together with conversation of systematic racism; questions of land ownership have also begun to take center-stage. The government is in the process of having public consultations on land expropriation thereby raising hope in the Black community for some retribution and justice. The

Black woman thinks, speaks and writes through the pain of her people, with her people even when she has no audience; as embodied by the three chosen intellectuals.

On Simphiwe Dana

As discussed above, Dana comes to blackness through her use of music as a tool of activism and the manner in which she employs her platform for activism. Since her burst into the scene, she has inspired thousands to connect with their roots and express their 'Africanness' during a time when this was not fashionable. Her music, sound, composition and lyrical content have been both cathartic and therapeutic for so many. Dana has been 'offline' for the better part of 2018 due to a bout of depression that left her paralysed in bed with suicidal thoughts. This is important to highlight because typically, the country expects Black women to be 'imbokodo' (rocks) that hold up the society and keep people together. In this case, Dana represents the intellectual identified by Spiller (1994) one who lives in a state of nervous condition as she attempts to grapple with her duties as a thinker and the unbearable state of her people. Dana does not suffer from depressive episodes because she is barren, on her periods or is menopausal; she does so because she is a thinking woman who observes questions and wonders. As it is common with Black intellectuals, particularly those conceptualised in this study as residing with the people and outside of the university; they tend to lack a sympathetic audience. Dana, as a musician tends to garner people's favour and admiration but her people also seek to put her in a neat little box and keep her there. It is her people who expect her to colour within the lines, stay in her lane and "just sing". In this way, her people tell her that intellectual activity is not for the likes of her, those who reside outside of traditional institutions of intellectual activity. Because of lack of fluidity in roles, identities and thought; Dana is frustrated as she does not get the answers her soul seeks daily. She embodies the spirit of a Fanonian Native Intellectual, she thinks about her people, with her people. This is proven by her involvement in physical protest during the #FeesMustFall movement. However, in 2018 South Africa; Dana as a Black thinking woman is an anomaly. She speaks from a place of pain and trauma that many are unwilling to confront yet. If anything, Dana is proof of Black woman's intellectual tradition and their custodianship of African knowledge in its raw form. She is the witch that refuses silence even in a

patriarchal society that seeks to analyse her thoughts from the men she has dated or the number of children she has; Dana pushes through.

When I pondered the question “can the Black woman think”, I sought to unearth women like Dana who are engaged in thought production but are shunned by the various oppressive layers of South African society. In her feminist activism, Dana defies all societal expectations that demand her silence by thinking when that job is reserved for men in the anti-black-sexist-patriarchal society. In the historical West, Dana would have been burned at the stake as the ancient witches who possessed indigenous knowledge that men could not get to. The question mostly asked is of women like Dana being able to speak in a society that is grounded in colonial patriarchy. I posit here that in fact she cannot speak, not because she has nothing to say or that she does not try to but because the conditions of her being do not allow her to do so. She, like her race and gender, Dana is still discarded from the human race and currently grapples with the process of restoration and healing. Dana represents the complexities, complicity and configuration of the native intellectual’s consciousness; she is the pain of her people.

On Ntsiki Mazwai

Ntsiki Mazwai is possibly the most controversial of the selected public intellectuals, she is widely known for what others think are outrageous commentary and opinions. I position Mazwai as a public intellectual here based on her ability to initiate, engage in and facilitate some important conversations. Through her work as a poet and activist, Mazwai speaks on a wide range of issues that affect the Black community; from political instability, politicians and greed, land, and education through to the ‘blesser’ phenomenon. Mazwai tends to get in ‘twars’ (twitter wars) with celebrities and Black Twitter due to the delivery of her opinions, she can be crass and blunt when addressing topics she is passionate about. For example, she constantly discusses the matter of Black women’s hair and how those who wear weaves/artificial hair in fact hate their blackness and are aspiring to be white women. Bear in mind, Mazwai is a self-proclaimed feminist who espouses the principles of female-togetherness and advancement. The difference between her brand of feminism and one that has

become popular in the country is that she claims that women need to be held accountable when they make decisions that harm the community.

Mazwai may be described as the epitome of the double-consciousness with which many Black intellectuals live today. She was raised in a Pan-Africanist home; an ideology that views the struggles of the Black woman and men as inherently intertwined and impossible to separate. This ideology espouses that the Black woman is the foremost Black man's partner and vice versa. This ideology tends to clash with contemporary feminist thought, which typically divides struggles along gender lines. Mazwai is not one to 'go easy' on Black men for their mistreatment of Black women; especially as a survivor of sexual violence herself. She is an avid supporter of women's activism against gender based violence. Mazwai once infamously berated the ANC for using Black women as "panties" at their events, not allowing them space to participate as equals in thought but parading them around half-naked for their own entertainment and sexual pleasure.

The kind of vocabulary Mazwai uses rubs many, both men and women, both Black and white, the wrong way; such that she gets accused of hating Black women, who have agency and exercise their choices as they see fit. Mazwai connotes thinking and speaking woman, one whose thoughts are not and need not be all the way complete or perfect. Mazwai, like the other chosen intellectuals, is confronted by the condition of her people and it ignites questions that span generations. She represents a classic case of an intellectual who, in the process of thinking and speaking, allows society to make her question her own meditations. I observe this in her almost monthly utterances of "I'm PMSing and I'm moody/cranky, so expect a rant". For so long, men equated her intellectual agony with some kind of an involuntary bodily function that she began to accept it such and actually frame her thoughts around said bodily functions. Mazwai is a Black public intellectual who has no audience or true following because Black Twitter gets easily frustrated with her. For some or other reason, Black Twitter frames her thinking processes as those of the frustrated sister of a successful individual, who herself is not living up to her own ambitions. She is framed as jealous, woman-hating, and woman-bashing. This of course could be further from the truth. Mazwai could/may/might be frustrated but her frustration is not a matter of success or

lack thereof, but a nervous reaction to thinking too deeply about blackness without finding any lasting solutions.

On Sisonke Msimang

Sisonke Msimang is arguably the most commercially palatable of the chosen intellectuals. She is a gender activist, author, and columnist for various outlets. Msimang is a so called “exile baby”, she was born and raised out of the country for most of her life as her parents fled the brutal apartheid regime. Because of this, she possesses a unique perspective on issues of blackness and what it means today. Msimang is widely accepted as an intellectual, supposedly based on West’s concept of writers as intellectuals who are accepted into the realm without much question. Many of those who interact with her work, even they disagree with her views, tend to approach her in much better than they do Mazwai or Dana. Msimang receives more respect and courtesy, based on her perceived intelligence emanating from her status as an author. She represents an intellectual who is relatable to Black and white people, perhaps deliberately or coincidentally.

As Black Twitter have associated the title of “intelligent Black feminist” upon her, she gets a captive audience that willingly gives her attention each time she has something to say. Her ideas are engaged differently, better, and more respectfully by this group. Msimang is a skilled writer who knows how to be controversial while controlled. Her white audience largely engages her respectfully even when they disagree with her. Of course she is subjected to the usual tropes of ‘race-baiter’, ‘race-obsessed’ or being told that addressing race sows division. Msimang is a thinker and is accepted as such. She exhibits a large amount of legitimacy which affords some space to think and speak. This space is afforded to her as far as she pleases those she speaks to, for and about. Black Twitter expects her to use her voice to address only issues they are comfortable with and members of the dominant society are willing to listen as long as she sanitises her thoughts. These expectations can induce a nervous condition intellectuals, the constant need to validate oneself to different members of society and to be palatable to everyone cannot be easy. Msimang, nonetheless, thinks and speaks through the various layers of trauma that she has endured. She fights for the rights of women, Black women like her who do not have the same opportunity she has.

Although calculated and aware of how she uses her voice, she refuses to be dictated to as far as what she thinks and speaks about.

8.2 Recommendations

This study examined the role and positionality of Black public intellectuals in a post-1994 South Africa that still faces challenges of Black exclusion, racial inequality, racism, spatial and socio-economic apartheid. Because of these pathologies, young Black intellectuals of different forms have been jolted out of comfort to speak on the fact of blackness using their personal social media accounts. I focused specifically on Black Twitter on purpose here, as I have observed the platform as the 'safe space' on which blackness expresses itself fearlessly. Firstly, I positioned Dana, Mazwai and Msimang as organic/native intellectuals; specifically because they operate outside the westernised university and reside with the people from whom they are born and with whom they work towards emancipation.

Although they are artists, musicians, poets, writers, activists, vocalists respectively; they are constantly engaged in knowledge production and dissemination and this makes them intellectuals according to definition. Their Twitter accounts are used to voice opinions, facilitate debates, start conversations, protest and support certain causes. This study then analysed their posts against matters of blackness including feminism, the Black condition world-wide and locally, Black solidarity on Black twitter, the intellectual tradition of Black women, their positionality in humanity historically and currently, the Black woman as her people's liberation. This analysis was conducted using Fanon's Native Intellectual Consciousness as the lens through which intellectuals who speak for the oppressed should function. The study proves that the Black is still "othered", dehumanised, criminalised, ignored, excluded and externalised even in what is meant to be her own land. The study was also used to position Black Twitter and the Black solidarity that is demonstrated on the platform as proof of the start in the process of the reconfiguration of Black people's communicative practice.
There is need for future research as far as 'Coloured' intellectuals on Black Twitter are positioned on issues of race, gender, and activism. This is particularly interesting because of the historical and current positioning of the Coloured population as the 'in-

between' or 'buffer' race between the Black and White. It would also be interesting to see the study conducted with 'Indian' intellectuals as well, particularly because of the manner in which they come to be "African/Black" and the history of enslavement in their community. I would also suggest studies on 'blackness' as a form of activism, an imposed identity that has been exalted with pride by Black people. It would be interesting to uncover whether this exaltation is in itself a form of activism against a system that denigrates anything and anyone Black. I would also recommend further monitoring and investigation of Black Twitter in various formats, as an educational tool (on Blackness, feminism, solidarity etc.), protest space, and communication arena. Feminist thought and how it materializes on Black Twitter also warrants an investigation, which brand of feminism, for example resonates with Black South African women and why this is so.

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